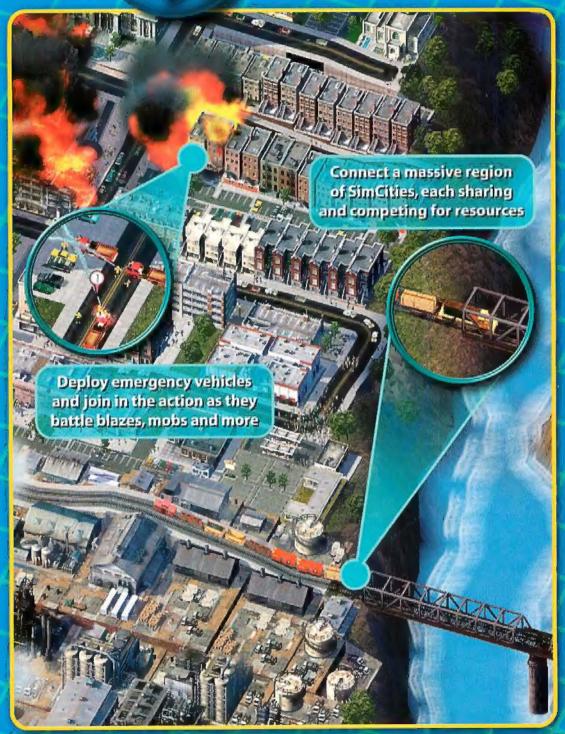


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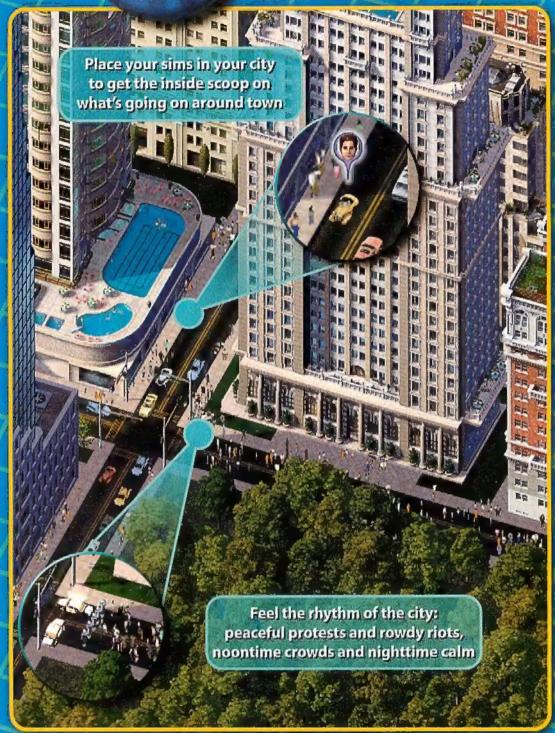




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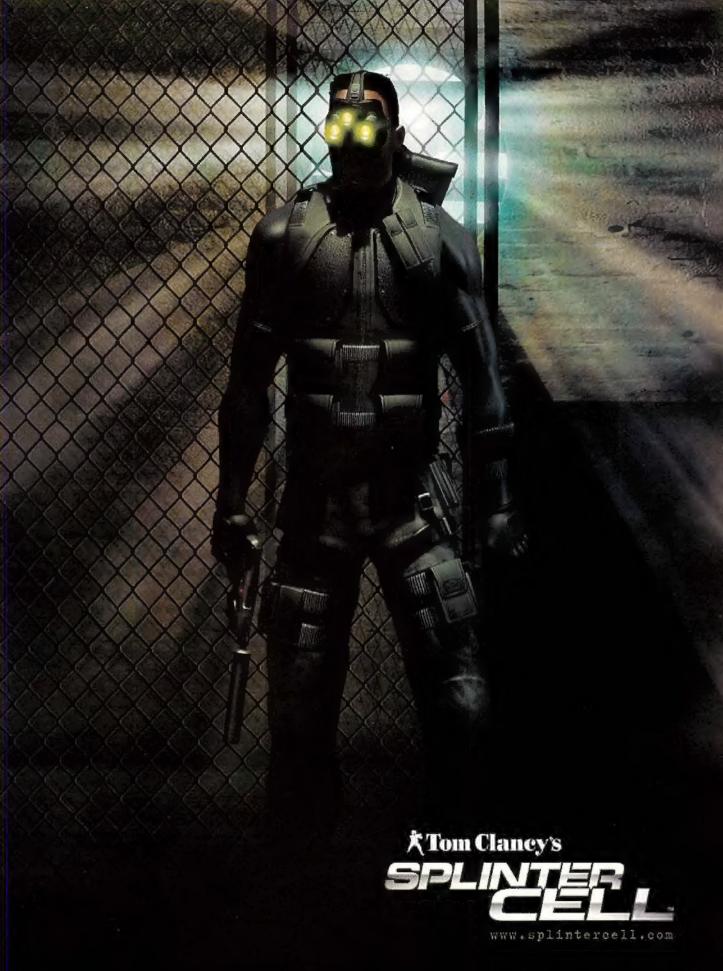
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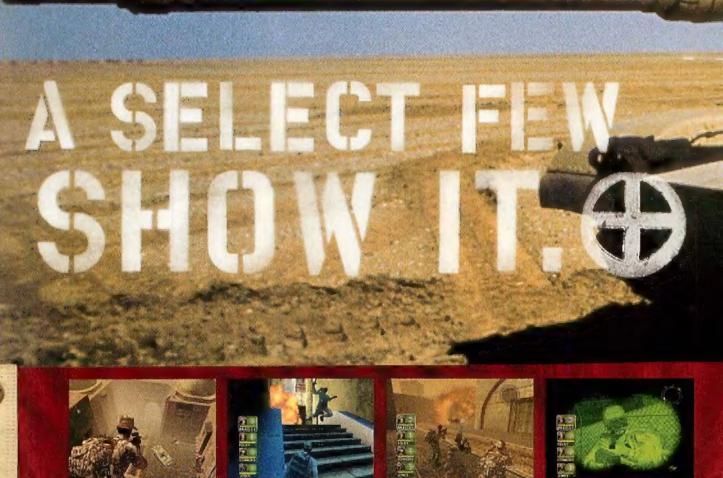








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> Scooter urges us to stop the hate and listen to Leonard Nimoy songs instead.

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These screenshots left us speechless. Well, almost. Get dumbfounded by these amazing shots from Hegemonia, SimCity 4, and Raven Shield.

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160 Greenspeak

If you complain about violence in gaming one more time, Jeff will kill you









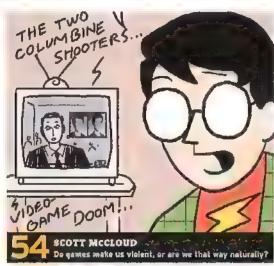


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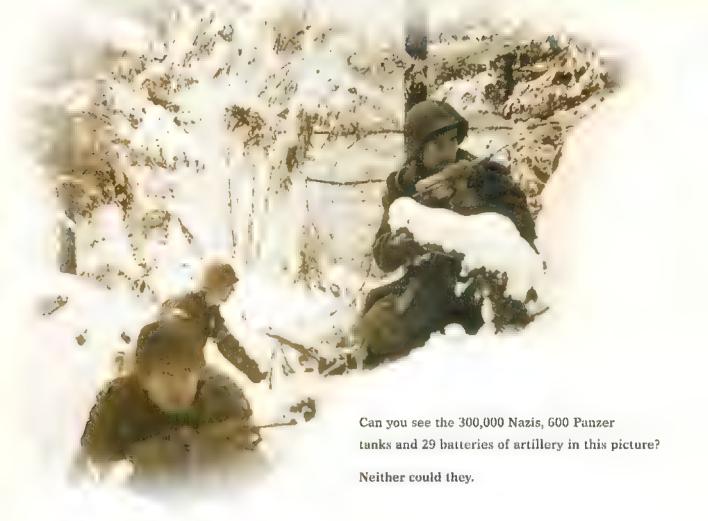








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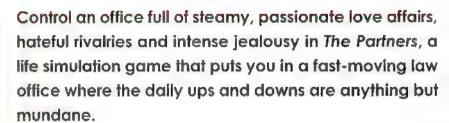
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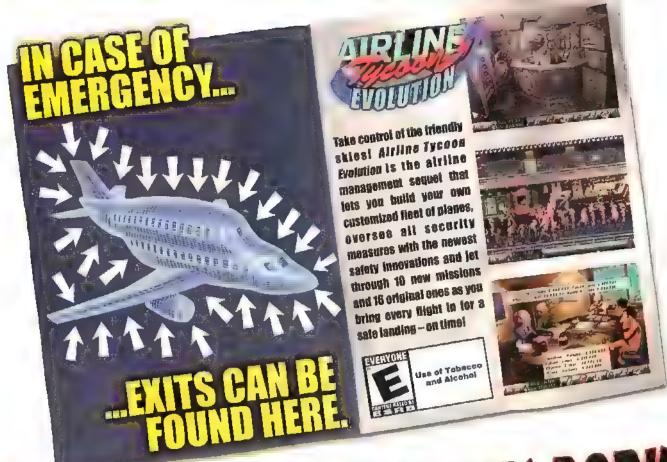


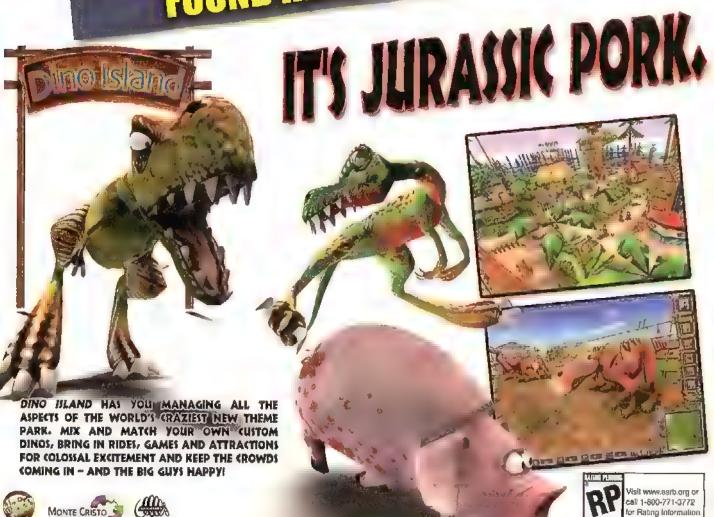




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#### Stop the Hate!

guess I'm writing this because I'm the least controversial person on staff. I'm no editorial firebrand like Wii O'Neal with his liberal claptrap, Tom Price with his fey anti-ell screeds, and Ken Brown with his dastardly treatment of his child. No, I just write about weird Japanese cartoons. While those three get voluminous hate mail, I get, "That show Scooter talked about is soooooooococococoool he kicks it like kung fu."

In our line of work, we tend to have some unpopular opinions. For every time we've raved about a Half-Life along with the rest of the press chorus, we've also panned a Vampire: The Masquerade when everyone else loved it. And you made sure we knew that everyone except us loved it. With every review, be it positive or negative, the floodgates open up and we get an in-box full of manifestos teiling us how wrong we all are.

I could just make blanket pronouncements like: "We're always right-live with it,

#### We don't like graffiti scrawl masquerading as email.

diliveed." And although that may be the case, an easier statement for us to present as the party line is: "This is our opinion, and we are standing behind it; sorry you disagree with us." Fifteen-page proclamations on why our opinion is wrong get met with the big fat X button that deletes mail in Microsoft Outlook. However, a focused, literate, 50-word paragraph explaining why a reader disagrees with a published review will be looked at and even possibly reprinted in Letters.

For those of you who want the Cliffs Notes version of this editorial, here you go: Our reviews are criticisms and recommendations, if you disagree, don't write us a letter filled with phrases like "j00 sux0rs!!!" instead take some time to think out a civil, intelligent response. We are always open for healthy discussion and debate; we don't like graffiti scrawl masquerading as email. Stop writing us cranky letters in order to validate your opinion while invalidating ours. If you love a game, just keep loving it—don't spend so much time trying to convince us to change our mind. Above all, remember that it's just one guy's (well, one guy plus an ed torial staff) opinion, nothing more.

That said, I recommend checking out the fine musical stylings of Messieurs Shatner and Nimoy in their Spaced Out! The Best of Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner album, and everyone should read a copy of Hiroyuk. Nishigaki's How To Goodbye Depression: If You Constrict Anus 100 Times Everyday. Malarkey? or Effective Way? Also, if you have a date coming over, I heartily recommend watching Takashi Milke's Audition. Nothing brings a couple closer than watching a woman work accipancture needles. And plano wire

Thierry Nguyen
Features Editor

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Eddor-in-Chief Jeff Green Editor Ken Brown (Read Me, CD-ROM) Managing Editor Dana Jongewaard (Gamer's Edge) Technical Editor William O'Neal (Hardware)

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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Charles Ardal, Mark Asher, T. Byrl Baker, Loyd Case, Tom Chick, Bruce Geryk, John Houllhan, Jeff Lackey, Raphael Liberatore, Thomas L. McDonald

#### ART DEPARTMENT

Art Director Rob Schultz Associate Art Director Michael Jennings Associate Art Director Jason Babier

#### PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

Manufacturing Director Ceries Lugo Graphics Managet Michele Kellogg Senior Production Manager Anne Merie Miquel Assistant Production Managet Teresa Newson

#### TO GAME BEAUE

Editoria: Director John Davisan Online Editoria: Director George Jones Creative Director Simon Cox Business Director Cathy Bandoff

#### HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITORS

To contact any member of the stell, firstname\_lastane@zilifaves.com Address nonsubscription rolated questions and feedback to: CGW Fillional, 50 Bear's Street 12th Fion, San Francisco, CA 94-095 or you may contact us via: CGWetters@zilidavis.com; phone, (415) 357-4900, or oditorial fax: (415) 357-4907, Website, www.computergaming.com

#### VINTEMATINE & SVITE ASSESSMENT

Group Publisher **Lee Uniacke** Group Associate Publisher **Sten Taigen** stan\_taigen8.z.ftdavis.com (415) 357-4915

Regional Sales Manager/ Northwest Territory Marci Yamaguchi marciy@z (fdavis.com (415) 357 4944

Account Executive/ Northwest Territory **Melghan O'Rourke** melghan\_urourke@affnayls.com (405) 357-4920

District Sales Reprosentative/ Bay Area Peninsula Mory Gray mary gray@affdavis.com (415) 547-8782 Account Executive/

Bay Area Peninsula Mery Letach mary\_letson@2/Ifdavis.com (415) 547-8777

Regional Sales Manager/ Midwest Territory Marc Callison marc\_cal ison@aiftdavis.com (630) 382 9034

Regional Sales Manager/ East Coast Territory Ian Sinctain Ian sinctair@artfdayrs.com (203) 255-4560

Account Executive/Midwest and East Coast Territory Emily Oxmon emity\_olman@z (fdav s.com (415) 357-5226

Regional Soles Manager/ Southwest Territory **Karon Landon** karen landon@2(ffdayls.com (760) 942-6277

Serror Account Executive/ Southwest Territory Linda Philapil I nda\_philapid #2iffdavis.com (415) 547-8781 Sen or Marketing Manager and

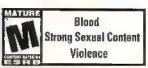
Creative Director Rey Ledda rey\_edda@xlfidavls.com (4l5) 547-8775 Marketing Coordinator Wayne Shiu wayne\_shiu@xlfiduvls.com (4l5) 547-8248

wayne\_sh u@z Milavis.com (415) 547-8248 Adverlising Coord nator Tipler Ubbelohde tipler\_abbelohde@al/davis.com (415) 357-4930 Sales Assistant Kristeen Lout kristeen\_laut@al/davis.com (415) 547-8778

Sales Assistant CJ Amit cj\_amil@zilfdavis.com (415) 547-8783

HOW TO CONTACT ADVERTISING & SALES Address inquiries for CGW Advertising, 50 Bea e St., 12th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94(05; phone: (415) 357-B778; fax. (415) 357-4999. Founder Russell Sipe













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# Letters

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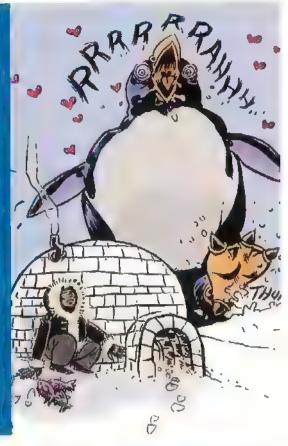
LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### One Canadian's Revenge

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Robert Welden





#### A Girl Gamer! Too Bad She's Canadian

My name is Vanessa, I'm 14, and yes, I'm a FEMALE computer gamer! I'm soon to become a subscriber to your amazing magazine-I'm very impressed with it! But anyway, I was wondering if you could help me. Way back when DOS was the king, I remember distinctly playing this cool game called Maniac Mansion (I was about 6) and I be leve It was shareware. I have searched everywhere for a copy of this game, but to no avail. The object of the game was to pick four characters.

two of which would go up to this crazy mansion and rescue your friend who was trapped by the evil scientist. It was a pretty corny game and the graphics were absolutely hornd, but still, I'd like to get a copy and reminisce with it. If you could tell me as much as you can about where I could find a copy, I will be forever in your debt...or maybe just keep subscrib ng....

Vanessa Sciauzero-Oshawa Ontario, CANADA

Maniac Mansion is a gaming classic and was the first in a series of LucasArts adventure games that included the Monkey Island games, Sam and Max Hit the Road, Day of the Tentacle (the sequel to MM), and the sublime Grim Fandango, among others. Your best bet for finding a copy of Maniac Mansion nowadays is probably eBay. Pick up the others while you're at it; you won't be disappointed.

"Review the content, instead of writing some story on beaver trapping."

#### **Babler and His Beaver**

After reading the review for Gore in your September issue, tiready felt that the entire piece crossed the line from simple irreverence for the subject mat ter into blatant disrespect, Obviously, if a game is poorly made, a bad review is warranted and even expected, so as to warn off consumers from wasting their money. PC Gamer published is own poor review of this game a month or two back, but at least they had the decency to actually review the content matter, instead of writing some story on beaver trapping, From what I do know of



# ANGE TO BOTTON THOUSEN

From the areatops of Figs of Empires

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#### "This will go down as a Black & White review. You'll see."

this game, it was put together by a couple of puys over a few years as a labor of love. The least you could have done was explain in your review why you didn't like the final product. What you did was unprofessional and leads me to question the value of any future review published in your magazine

P. Summey

Sometimes I think your magazine rates the reviews by payment. For example, I'm a big company with a lot of advertising money, I give you a game to review If the game gets I star, one ad. Five stars, five full-page color ads. Right when I'm about to lose hope, Jason Babler comes along with the best review ever. His Gore: Ultimate Soldier review is so truthfull I know no one can make this stuff up, and it's obvious that Mr. Babler has the freedom to write what he feels is best. Thank you for having such a wellmanaged magazinel

James

James, there are two things we don't stand for around here; people questioning our editorial integrity and people complimenting Jason's writing. Hello! He's Just a measiy artisti Make us mad like this again and we'll come over to your house en masse to kick your butt. As soon as EA sends the limo over to pick us up.

#### Someone Finally Feels Our Potes

I was just thinking (not on purpose, mind you) as I was reading the latest issue of CGW. What is the process you po through when choosing which letters are to be printed and which letters are to be rejected and left on the coffee room table until someone spills something all over them so they have to be thrown out? (That's what we do with our junk mail!) And I also noticed another thing...WHY must you print the letters mailed by pirifriendless nerds who have nothing better to do than point out your spelling errors and argue with your reviews? Out of the bunch of retters that are printed, maybe four have some relevant, thoughtful insight to them. That's all I wanted to knowexpect my subscription renewal form in the mail.

French-Fries

#### Who're Gullible

I was very disappointed with the review of NWN In the September issue Since when do you review games on their potential? "Play a good RPG, then make a great one," Yeah right BioWare

couldn't do it, but a band of unpaid computer geeks will rise up and save the day. NWN is a 3-star game.

You seem to have fallen for the hype. The reviewer glassed over the problems. This game was released prematurely. There's even an ad in the same issue that urges people to "preorder," I guess they didn't expect the game to be out yet. The atest 1.21 patch should be considered one of the worst patches in history and BioWare continuing to leave it up is contemptible. This will go down as another Black & White review. You'll see, BTW: Hove your magazine Really

Marty Keneally

#### Nobody Knew Who They Were, or Where They Were Going

As a Christian. I have had considerable difficulty finding a fantasy Tolklenesque RPG that I would like to play. Now I have finally pinpointed the problem I (and others (Ike me) have with RPGs; the great a'heaping of druidic references. From idiotic ones like holly plants and oaks involved in spells, to rather dangerous ones like pentagrams and summoning up monsters and demons and goodness knows what else, practically all fantasy RPGs (especially those ones associated with Dungeons & Dragons) are stuffed with this druidic stuff, Magic, fine. Spells, fine. But for the love of all that is good. enough with Stonehenge! I'm really getting sick of seeing it every time I play a fantasy game.

I can't imagine that any of you (with the possible exception of Robert Coffey. who sounds like he moon lights as a witch. doctor on the Internet to some ward tribe in Bonga Bonga) really give a cartload of mathems (I'm testing your dorkdom) whether or not RPGs are plastered with demonic stuff. So, for the sake of those who do (and would) give a cartload of mathoms, please wield whatever mighty influence you have to encourage game developers to tone down the druidic garbage

Michael J. Reale





#### Jethro Tull Fans, Unite!

You know I promised myself I would not start this letter by Lyping [\*\*\* you a\*\*\*\*\*, so I added a few words first, I am willing to bet that your career and this magazine, which gets worse by the month, will not last as long as Jethro Tuil.

If your editorial ranting (September 2002] against nerds, Jethro Tull, and elves is the funnlest thing that you can write, then I feet great sadness for you. You should also realize that the groups you are against are the same people who buy this ran (except for the elves, of course) and therefore pay your salary, if the intention of the article was to cost the magazine more subscriptions, then you may have succeeded in a big way. The magazine has turned to crap lately anyway, so it will be no great loss if I let my subscription run out.

I think you need to applopize to nerds. elves, and especially to lan Anderson immediately.

> A soon-to-be-ex-subscriber. Peter Fochesato

#### I Think We've Found Our MODAL BATHERY

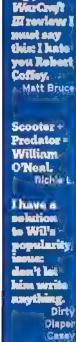
I'm writing in response to Mike who wrote the letter titled "We Want a LOTR Game, My Precioussss......" In your September 2002 issue. Arvone who says "mind you," "thrice," and then quotes a Dune movie seriously needs a swift kick in the gonads. I am offering my services in that area should Jeff have any trouble velorging his Skechers, I'm free weekday evenings, not because I have an important job, but because that's usually when I wake up.

Jess

#### We Lied!

I have been a long-time subscriber to your magazine, and I enjoy the major ty of your reviews and agree with most of them. But in your review of GTA III you lied! You said that Liberty City is a lictional place when it isn't. Here in Miami, Florida, there is a neighborhood called Liberty City and it is very much like the Liberty City from the game, Just letting you know that there are places that suck a fat one.

Adam Geist









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#### **Passive Gaming**

tive been a fan of your magazine for guite some time, but in your September issue your review of GTA III missed one critical point that makes it such an exprosive game, GTA III creates a world where there is more happening than whatever your character is doing. Ever just sit on a busy or crowded corner and watched time fly? You get to see muggings, hit and runs, car accidents, yupples in sports cars zlooing through traffic, gangland fights, and more. Suddenly instead of the player's needs and goals being the focapoint of the world, you get the impression that you are just a small fish in a big sea. I have a feeling this feature will come to dominate the future of gaming, as technology makes it easier and more feasible to propolithis idea into other genres and games.

> C. Lion Los Angeles, California

Wow, that was a deep, almost Zenlike observation, C. Do you want to be our staff guru?

#### We'll Have to Unfreeza Jeff's Head, but OK

Dude, if you could do me a favor, when Dake Nukem Forever comes out, give my great grandchildren a call and say it would have been their great-grandpa's dream to live to see the day, would you? Emil Tsao

#### The Future Mrs. Wil O'Heal

THIS ONES 4 U WIL ABOUT YOUR STUPID F\*\*\*\*\* COLOUM ABOUT A CAMRA WHATEVER ISSUE IT WAS THEN YOU TALKED ABOUT A SPORT TRAC? I DRIVE A SPORT TRAC.

#### "When Duke Nukem Forever comes out, give my great-grandchildren a call"

AND LET ME TELL YOU ITS MORE USE FUL THAN THAT NAPPY HAIR YOU GOT. AND ONE MORE THING THING, THIS IS A GAMING MAGINZE JEFF.,, IF THIS IS ALL UR TECH DEPARTMENT CAN COME JP



WITH, WHY DONT YOU FIRE HIS SORRY ASS. IM CANCEL, ING MY SUBSCRIP-TION AND GOING TO PC GAMER, AT LEAST THEY TALK ABOUT GAMES. Brandy McLain, Louisiana

PS. JEFF YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT YOUR 'GREENSPEAK' IN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS, EVERYONES KNOWS THAT LAME SHIT IS ON THE LAST PAGE

You know, Jeff, Brandy does have a point about your column.

#### A Minor Problem

Mature ratings on video games are to inform parents of the content of video games. It is the parents' responsibility to keep track of what their children are playing, watching, and listening to dur no their spare time. This bill (see September 2002 (ssue, page 40) is just one more example of parents pushing off the responsibilities onto someone else. Let's say Mutt can't buy the video game anywhere, now what is he going to do? Probably go smoke pot or spend his money on other things that are degal or more destructive than playing a video game.

Adam H., 21

I am 16 years old, and I play a lot of computer and console games. Most of them are Mirated, Why? Because my parents allow me to, not because they don't CARE, but because they realize that I am old enaugh to distinguish the difference between a game and reality. My parents always know what I am buying because they ask. The same thing goes with COs-Hister to Slipknot and Korn and other hard rock. And my parents know, they also know that my music isn't the source of all evil. Parents should be involved with minors' purchases, so there shouldn't be any restrictions as far as retailers oo.

SASdude

#### Correction

The Letter of the Month illustration in the October issue was done by Colin Adams (www.colinadams.com).

#### Penny Arcade BY MIKE KRAHULIK AND JERRY HOLKINS



# THE FACE OF WAR HAS CHANGED

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"...HIGH ON MY LIST OF GAMES TO PLAY." — GAMESPY

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www.iron-storm.com

The Face Of War Changes October 2002







PlayStation\_2 E







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Figure 4 Shared Memory: Berussian 32 and 64 MB of system memory may be allocated to support graphics, depending on system memory size and other factors. Purchase Plan.

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The hottest shots of the best new games Edna & by Tom Price

If you needed more convincing to go out and buy a nextgeneration graphics card (and considering how well the newtechnologies in upcoming games like UT 2003 and Doom III areusing those cards' powers, we gotta wonder what other proof you need), then take a. look at the stunning Hegemonia from Digital Reality, the developers of imperium: Galactica I and II. Set in 2104, Hegemonia is a space-based 3D RTS that has you battling fleets: of fighters, capital ships, space stations, and everything inbetween as you protect our solar system from outsideinvaders. Hegemonia should be occupying hard drive spacecome this fall.





# SIM CITY 4

It's hard to remember now, but way back in the '90s, back; when gamers were real men who made their AUTOEXEC.BAT files and liked it, SimCity was the signature franchise for Maxis-one of the original blockbuster PC games, in the last few years, of course, it's been eclipsed by upstart spinoff The Sims-but that's only encouraged the SimCity 4 team to try harder. As the game gets closer to completion, we continue to be impressed by the game's intense level of control and ease of use, And check out: them tornaders!

32 Computer Gaming World





# RAINBOW SIX: RAVEN SHIELD

Did you miss all the cool, slick( counterterrorism hijinks in our July Issue? Well, here's a quick refresher; you get the depth and realism of past Reinbow Six games, with Interface and accessibility tweaks to make the game fund for everyone, whether you'rean ex-Special Forces soldier turned-gamer or a fan whe just knows Counter-Strike The switch to Unreal technology translates into a beautiful counterterrorism sim worthy of a Loading shot. Get ready to thwart tangos this November.

34 Computer Graning World

This guy could have outfitted his gun with 1

Kagaling and othe actions like lying proc or animated correctly thanks to skeletal modeling

we didn't want to cluster this light and with an ugly interface graphic. Suffice it to say, all you had to do to get in here was put the cursor an the doon salest Open & Clear, and watch the team go into action















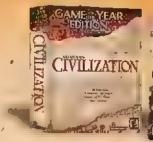




## What if there was only one god? And it was you?

What would the world be like if you created it? Peaceful? Filled with war? Welcome to Civilization III, the computer game created by Sid Meier, the Steven Spielberg of PC games. Named Computer Games Magazine "2001 Game of the Year," this special edition also features new scenarios and a strategy guide sampler.

Also visit Civ3.com to find out about Play The World," a multiplayer expansion pack that lets you go head to head, and play a game in about an hour. It's an all new way to play Civ.







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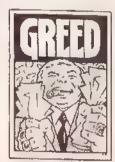
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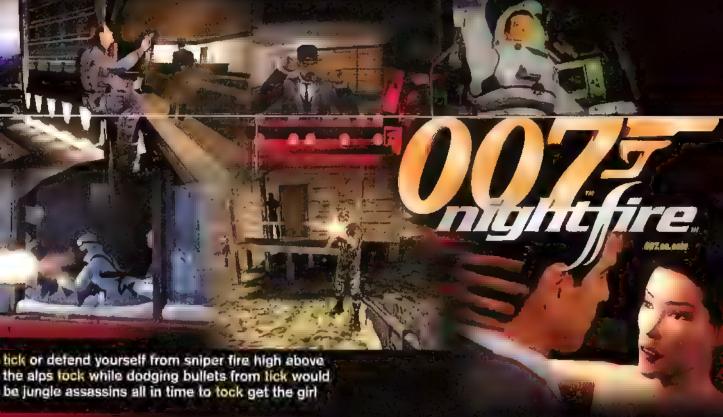


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39

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tick a laser camera, tock and magnets tick all to help you obtain secret documents tock and then scale the walls of a large international organization 60 stories above Tokyo,



but don't pet yourself on the back yet tick because that was only one minute tock and there are still 1,400 left in the day tick and 14 more classic Bond enemies to fight online.

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# Read Me

The opposite of reality TV Edited by Ken Brown



Guns and money in the heart of Texas By Thierry Nguyen







#### SCOTT MECLOUII Reads between the lines of reports on violence, Page 52





C&C: GENERALS Westwood's latest RTS looks amazing, Page 56



nce again, id Software impressed gamers with its annual QuakeCon, which has transformed from an informal fan gathering into a mini-E3 put on by Texas-based developers and open to gamers everywhere.

What was different about this year's OuakeCon was the juicy info given about Doom III. Carmack's xeynote this year had less of the technical jargon that his keynotes are known for and more details about the game itself.

Besides confirming the Xbox release of Doom III, Carmack and his Id cohorts discussed some gameplay features. Revelations included limited outdoor environments (the player might get trapped outside the base, for instance), usable computers (complete with interface, used for obtaining mission objectives and solving puzzies), and a weapons list. The major Doom weapons will be back, including shotgun, assault rifle, rocket launcher, and BFG. There might be a chain saw, but it's not confirmed yet.

.d has resurrected and updated several classic monsters for the game, including the Demon, Hell Knight, Imp,

#### Id has resurrected several classic monsters for Doom III, including the Demon, Hell Knight, Imp, and rocket-launcher-wielding Revenant from Doom II.

and the dual shoulder-mounted-rocketlauncher-wielding Revenant from Doom II.

Gamers who flocked to QuakeCon were given tickets to the Doom III theater, the same one used in E3. The audience enjoyed a revised version of the E3 demo that showed off a higher resolution and better detail thanks to the ATI Radeon 9700 with optimized drivers.

Activision also offered up Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory and Star Trek: Elite Force II. Enemy Territory will be a stand-alone product that builds on the team-play aspect seen in Return to Castle Wolfenstein's multi-player. In the single-player campaign, the player will have a squad of Al controlled bots, serving as engineer, medic, and lieutenant.





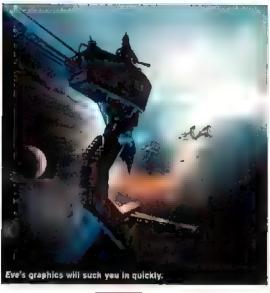
Work on Ente Farce II proceeds strongly. The team from Ritual showed off a more populated version of the level displayed at E3 and also demonstrated more monsters, new weapons, and various uses for the tricorder.

In tournament news, favored gamers like John "ZeRo4" Hili (who won ast year's tournament) and Johnathen "fatallty" Wende ended up not competing for the grand prize; the winner this year was Alexey "Mi9\*LeXeR" Nesteroy, who took away \$20,000 for himself in the Wolfenstein team tournament, The Doctors (a Canada-based clan) took the \$25,000 grand prize.

Look for a story on the process of putting QuakeCon together next month.











PREVIEW

#### **Eve: The Second Genesis**

Star Trek meets EverQuest in this sharp massively multiplayer space sim By Tom Price

Eve's focus on PVP combat means there will be lots of action.



ome of us dream of the day when we can live and trave through space,

exploring distant worlds and contacting alien life forms. That day may not come in our lifetimes, but we can a ways dream about it. And what better way to dream about something than to play it?

Eve: The Second Genesis lets you do just that. It's a mass vely multiplayer space sim set in a galaxy distant from Earth. Players conduct business as they travel around the more than 5,000 solar systems in customizable ships that range from small fighters to large capital ships.

First you'll choose a race and profession. There are five races in the game each with unique characteristics. Careers include the military, pirating, space trading, and bounty hunting. Jobs are usually advertised at space sta tions, either by NPCs or human players who need to have something dane.

What separates Eve from other MMOs is that it focuses more on player-versus-player combat. There will be a lot of act on out there, not just people killing bots for experience points. In fact, there are no experience points or leveling up. Players fearn specific skills; the more they learn, the more powers and ab Titles they'll have. If you get your ship blasted out from under you, you can escape in a pod, but you can also be captured and held for ransom, or killed and your body harvested for biomass.

Watch for Eve to go online sometime ate this year



# Mighty Mini

Combo MP3 player will carry your music and game files, too By George Jones

he Creative Nomad McVo is one awesome little gadget. The size of a cigarette lighter and weighing a mere one ounce, the diminutive

device is both a portable hard drive and MP3 player it delivers high-fidelity audio (20Hz to 20KHz) and can store 64 or 128MB (depending on the model) of music, game saves, and downloads. Just hook it into your USB port.

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GEEKFEST

# **Better Than Blatz**

Gamers flock to Milwaukee for GenCon 2002 By Tracy Baker

or those who could see past the Heroclix and med eval chicks, there was plenty of PC goodness to be found at GenCon 2002. As experted, the show was big on massively multiplayer RPGs, including grassroots efforts like Rubles of Eventide as well as goliaths like EverQuest and Asheron's Call 2. The EQ. forks were showing off the Planes of Power expansion, which features some terrific animation and 20 new zones that all have a unique look. Ubi Soft's booth was besieged by swarms of players looking to play the latest beta of Shadowbane, which looks like the game grizzled MMO fans have been waiting for. We were impressed with the completely custom-zable interface, and the unrestricted player versus player environment caters to the hardcore. Fortunately there are no anonymous kills, so feel free to gather up your guild buddles to dish out some serious payback, "Our backstory is The

Fellowship of the Ring meets The Road Warrion" says lore master and designer Sam Johnson. The brutal, free form gameplay reflects that vision

The surprise hit of the show was Simon & Schuster Interactive's massively multiplayer space opera Eve The Second Genesis, which was set up alongside the company's Farscape game on a single demo machine crammed in a tiny booth. The stunning space-scapes and 70 ship models had passers-by pawking throughout the show. Eve is all about big numbers, and senior producer Mike Wallace promised we'd see IOO,000 simultaneous players scattered throughout 10,000 solar systems. (For more on Eve, see our preview on page 45.)

Microsoft drew huge crowds to see MechWarrior 4: Mercenaries, Impossible Creatures, Freelancer, Age of Mythology, and Asheron's Call 2. MechWarrlor fans were lined up around the booth to get a chance to plast one another in the game pods that were set up to demo

Mercenaries, which is shaping up to be one of the best in the series in both its concept and execution. The new ability to use a secondary lance means players can command up to eight mechs at once. There are enough customization ontions that even the famous mechmeister T.J. Wagner is still spending a of of time a ecina together the perfect instrument of destruction, "My flancée calls it 'the home shopping network." he says. (See the preview on page 82 for details.)

Other highlights at the Microsoft booth included an updated demo of Age of Mythology and an early alpha of Rise of Nations that really showed off how distinct each race will be. Freelancer, Asheron's Call 2, and Impossible Creatures looked almost ready to ship.

GenCon moves next year, but unfortunately not back to the Playboy resort where the show was held in 1977. Instead, we'll see you in Indianapolis next July

The surprise hit of the show was Simon & Schuster's massively multiplayer space opera Eve.





# Don't hold your games back.

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UPDATE

## Unreal II

#### The shooter that will beat Halo like a gong By Jason Brown

The explosions, shots, and fire were dazzlingly over the top in terms of special effects.

ince our March cover story. we hadn't seen much of Unreal II, so we jumped at the chance to check out the latest build with the team's executive producer, We went into the demo with high expectations, and it still blew us away. The only games that can stand up to its amazing graphics are Doom III and Deus Ex 2, and Unreal II will beat both of those games to shelves by a year Remember Halo? Well, when this game ships, you won't

have to anymore. The environments are all beautiful and distinctly different. One of the game's I3 worlds, which appeared to be a mix of the environments of Allens and Star Trek's Borg, was not only stylish, but also of unusually immense scale. Instead of the typical corridors and rooms, Unreal II

is getting expansive interiors that dwarf the player- the massive alien structures make players fee like peons.

We expect a lot of pyrotechnics in an Unreal Little, and this game delivers. From flamethrowers to incendiary grenades to anen EMP blasts, the explosions, shots, and fire were dazz ingly over the top in terms of special effects.

We were glad to hear why infogrames chose Legend Entertainment (Wheel of Time) to develop the game. Executive producer Matthew Powers says Legend was chosen because they understand now important story is to an immersive experience. To this end, the design team is also focusing on numerous scripted events to tell the story and boost the "wow" factor

We could talk about the stellar At that crouches, creeps, ducks behind cover, and circles around pillars. We could go on about the unique weapons for the two classes, human and a len-each of which has an alternate fire. We could lark about how you can deploy and command marines and posit on sentry turrets to defend an area. Or we could talk about how each map seems to have combationallenges that make every mission different

But let's just leave it at this: everything we're looking for in an FPS is in there. The only hitch is that it's been delayed until early 2003, to prevent cannibal zing sales of Unreal Tournament 2003, Hurry the hell on, Enic!

#### THE GOOD, THE



#### THE GOOD CELTIC

Strategy First scored blo last vear with its sleeper strategy game Kohanbesting Cly III for

every major strategy game award-and it looks like they could very well do it again this year with the just-released Celtic Kings: Rage of War, as good a game about ancient warfare as we've played in a long time. Check out our review in this issue.



#### UNREAL II IN 2003

Not again! Another game we badly want-delayed! Infogrames announced that Unreal II is slipping until 2003 because UT 2003, which is coming out first, is late, and they don't want the two games overlapping. We understand, but we're annoved anyway, because Unreal II has been looking sweeter than ever. Every day this game gets delayed, another little piece of us dles inside.



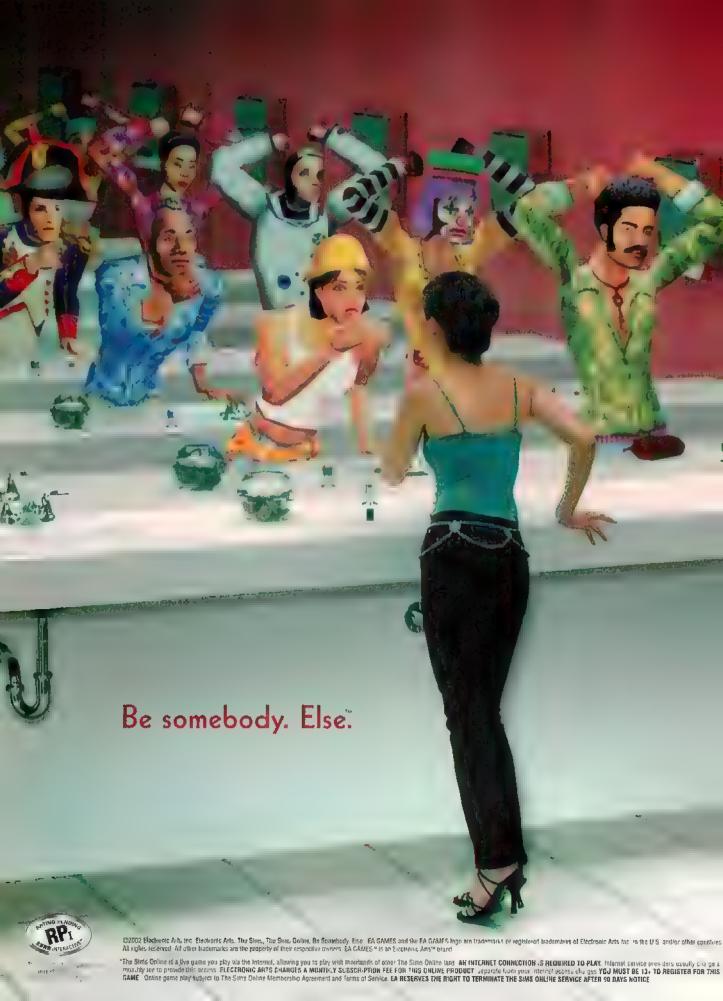
#### WE HALL **JUSTIN ON** AMERICAN IDOL

Yeah, we know that this has nothing to do with pamino. And we hate to admit that we

watch American Idol, But Justin must die. We can't stand him. The insufferable smile, the bony legs in leather pants, and especially the Sideshow Bob hair. By the time you read this, we'll all know whether he won, but right now. he's inexplicably made it to the final two. We hate him.











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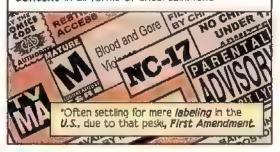


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# DISCOVERINGGAMES



Throughout the 20th century, *legislators* and self-appointed *watchdog groups* have called for the *control* (or *elimination*) of *violent* content in all forms of entertainment—\*



--rarely asking **Why** we're attracted to such content in the first place.

My loyal flock give their children Crosses, not guns.



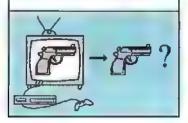
Truth is, even the sweetest, most serene kids — and adults for that matter — will still get a kick out of make-believe violence sometimes.

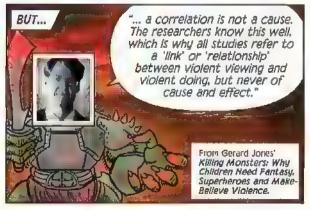


But, it's when violent entertainment and violent behavior coincide that cries for censorship soar.



Countless studies have found "correlations" between kids who act out violently in life and who prefer violent entertainment, leading many to assume a causal chain.





"The link may mean only that aggressive kids like violent entertainment."



or even that the latter provides a *healthy* alternative for the former.

In truth, society functions in large part because we suppress aggression everyday. Games provide an outlet for those urges.



And whether a game leaves its potential for violence well-disguised --



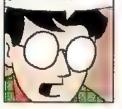
-- or gives us thought-provoking choices of good and evil --



- or actually compels us to commit crimes as a part of routine game play --



-- eliminating those fantasies would do little to reduce real-world violence, and in fact might do just the opposite.





RollerCeaster Tycoen 2 adds five complete Six Fings thome parks for you to play with, Here's the Rolling Thunder ride at Magic Mountain in California.

HANDS ON

# RollerCoaster Tycoon 2

Everyone's favorite vomit sim is back! By Jeff Green



ince its 1999 debut. RollerCoaster Tycoon has become one of the most

successful and influential computer games of the past decade, selling millions of copies and inspiring every third-rate game designer to cash in on ts success with their own tycoon game.

Not bad for what is essentially a one man operation. Independent game developer and roller coaster tanalic Chris Sawyer designed both Roller Coaster Tycoon and its seque completely on his own.

At first glance, the sequel (due out now) looks the same. But a good look at the beta reveals how much has improved. You now create parks on a

much larger grid, and you can build the coasters themselves at greater elevations, practically begging your guests to launch some truly spectacular projectile vomits. There are many more animations now (one coaster ride, according to Infogrames, has more animations than appeared the entire first game). The engine has been tweaked for faster. smoother scrolling around your park.

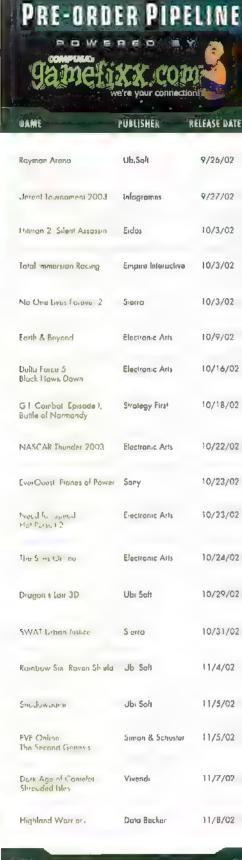
As in the first game, there's no inked campaign, just a series of increasingly difficult scenarios. There will be new objects stores, and themes, but for fans of real-life roller coasters, the biggest news is the inclusion of five actual Six Flags theme parks and 25 of their most popular rides, rendered in their entirety for you to play with, study, and modify

The sequel addresses our biogest complaint over the or ginal by including a sandbox mode for designing parks and rides in a freeform environment. A new editor will also let you create scenarios with virtually limitless customization that you can upload and share with others.

Doom III this ain't. Graon as border on primitive and gameplay doesn't exactly offer the kind of adrenaune rush that will convert Counter-Strike addicts, Bul RollerCoaster Tycoon 2 has the appearance of offering a better, bigger, more stream ined version of a humble yet weird y add cting game.



RollerCoaster Tycoon inspired every thirdrate designer to cash in on its success.









the enemy or shoot down the towers and let them crush their targets instead.



for tanks that spaw lets of fire.

# **Command & Conquer: Generals**

Armies with devastating firepower await your orders, sir By Thierry Nguyen

The game's depiction conflict between China, the U.S., and a terrorist group has lots of explosive action

on't expect pixellated tank rushes or Grant Sourds with psychic attack powers in this Command & Conquer, Instead picture battles reminiscent of Black Hawk Down or Operation Desert Storm. filled with supersonic fighters, massive tanks, angry mobs, Tomahawk missiles, and devastating air fuel weapons, all in gritty 3D. The game's depiction of a violent conflict between China, the U.S., and a terrorist group has jots of impressive elements like air-to-air combat, nuclear strikes, and buildings and landscapes there for destroying.

After seeing limited gameplay at £3, we recently had the opportunity to see the game in action at the offices of EA Pacific, From the U.S. campaign, we played the tutorial and the first and fourth missions. Rather than offer the typical stale tutorial. Generals follows C&C: Renegade in giving you a realistic mission that happens to have training elements. In the tutorial, players attack a Global Liberation Army chemical factory.

Veteran C&C players will notice that The interface menu has moved to the bottom of the screen from the side. Another big change is that you now use



Each side has a big superweapon; the U.S. has a satellite ion cannon, the Chinese have a nuclear missile (shown here), and the GLA have a chemical one

a bul dozer unit to construct a base. Rather than be limited by a power grid (as in previous C&C games), you can now build a structure anywhere, just as long as you can get a bul dozer to your target location. Also, buildings and units are now upgradable; you have the option of adding control rods to the power plant to make it more efficient, and you can upgrade each ranger infantry to carry flashbangs and scout drones.

Generals' answer to the preponder ance of heroes in most RTS games is the generals themselves. Each side chooses one of three generals; each general, in turn, influences the player by adding automatic unit veterancy, new attacks, and new units.

The first mission, Siege of Baghdad, showed off more features, such as populated cities with civilian crowds and the ability to knock over buildings, which can be used to your advantage. Severatimes after scoring a direct hit on a tower, I was treated to the sight of it collapsing onto some hap ess soldiers.

The beach assault mission is a weird mix of Black Hawk Down and the opening scene of Saving Private Rvan. Your rangers and Tomahawk missile launchers are getting hammered by GLA defenders rooted in the beachhead, and you have to find a way to neutralize them and establish a base

Although they had or ginally scheduled a preholiday release, the EA Pacific developers want to take their time to do this one right, so they have pushed the release to late January. Stay tuned for an in-depth preview next month, covering more details like the three sides, the campaign, and which side has the Biggest Tank, Ever,



# Massively Merciless

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PREVIEW

## **Master of Orion III**

Will Quicksilver's space-based opus appeal to more than just MOO fans? By Jason Brown



n January we were so excited about MOO III we put it on the cover, Developer

Oulcasilver Software has pushed the ship date from this past spring to this year's holidays, but even with the extra development time, what we saw recent vi didn't exactly knock our socks off.

The interface seemed bland. The main new addition is a status report that pops up each turn and lists everything that occurred in your empire. It's exhaustive and useful (we guess), but at this point t's al just text.

One aspect the team has been focusng on intently is allowing players to

micromanagement fater in the game.

Combat really disappointed us, it's not hard to build a fleet and you can set rally points anywhere you want, but the ships and special effects looked simplistic. Even the planets and bases looked fairly standard. There was nothing interesting in the background or the textures, and

#### What we saw didn't exactly knock our socks off.

The design is unquestionably ambitious, with huge palaxies, colonization, trading, espionage, politics, a large number of alien races, space combat. and more. It may please old-school MOO players who don't care about whiz-bang graphics, but it looked dated to us.

automate a most everything in the game. You can set the AI to kick in whenever certain conditions are met. For example, if a planet experiences unrest. you can have the Al respond with a predetermined set of actions. This should go a long way toward reducing

the most noticeable piece of the battle map was the orid plastered on top. On top of that, the units had about as much detail as board game pieces. We were to d that combat doesn't require a 3D accelerator card, and we believe it. But in this day and age, that's not a bonus.



#### And maybe your mom will stop crying



We downloaded: the Earthviewer from www

.earthvlewer.com

and were simultaneously wowedand creeped out by the detailed satellite imagery of our homes, our office building (above), and the lawn-jockey-strawn trailer; park hevels of every reader who has written to tell us how full of crap we are. Be warned, Jonathon Livingsten Nazgulwe're watching you.



Incredibly to-fi recordings by a slightly lisping .

manic-depressive may not sound like the best purchase, but you'd be wrong. The poster, boy for outsider music, Daniel Johnston makes some of the most poignant, funny, melodic music we've heard. The double CD of Continued Story/HI. How-Are You is a great way to discover his weird brand of genius.



Nothing livens up the exercise

in tedium of the annual family Thanksgiving dinner like a big vat of cheap alcohol. Suddenly you'll find the courage to tell. your parents about the nasty. thing Santa did to Mommy under: the mistletoe that year you cried all through Christmas. Play your cards right and you won't even be invited to the kids" table next year, ...



Horuki Murakami is a master of the surreal, and this nevel is pure genius. With a missing wife, a

pair of psychic sisters, and the search for truth at the bottom. of a well, he takes you on a mine-blowing journey. Tals is one trip we highly recommend you take-just don't forget to bring your baseball bat.



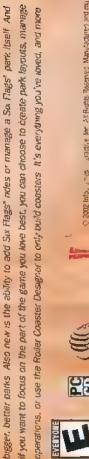
# 4 out of 5 people agree you can create wilder coasters with RollerCoaster Tycoon 2.



Six Flags Mag.c Mountain



All new Roller Coaster Designer



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www.RollerCoasterTycoon2 com



HANDS ON

# **World Warp One**

The first World War never ended in the alternate reality shooter Iron Storm By Rob Smolka

o matter what you think of the name. you have to give

Iron Storm's atternate reality of a World War I that never ended some points for originality. The year is 1964, and for 50 years war has raped in Europe. resulting in an understandably depressed group of combatants. With the hope of putting an end to the madness, you, in the role of Lt. James Anderson, must complete a series of stealth missions to try to eliminate. the opposition's head man.

Baron Ungern-Sternberg.

From the preview version we played, fron Storm seems fairly typical of the genre, with either a first- or third-person perspective avaitable in campaign mode or multiplayer. The setting adds quite a bit of flavor to the proceedings, influencing everything from weapon design to the vehicles to the uniforms. The engine does a decent job of displaying terrain features, but the character models are rather angular, and the details. like he-synching and fluidity of animations, seem a bit off. There

is still time for developer 4X Studios to work out the kinks, so we hope this will be addressed.

We were Impressed with a few features, such as the reactions of the computer-controlled soid ers, both friendly and hostile. The sound effects are also we I done, making you feel as if you're right smack in the middle of the conflagration, 4X Studios claims to be inspired by Medal of Honor, but the game teels more like Westwood's Renegade, We'll find out for sure when it's released this holiday season.

# Casino Empire

Like Vegas, without the hookers and puke By John Houlihan



ven Robert De Niro's legendary character couldn't rule the strip in Casino, but that's exactly what

you're supposed to do in Sierra's Casino Empire. The new strategy game plays like a kind of "Casino Theme Park" and challenges you to run the entire operation-hiring dealers, feeding your players, sabotaging rivals, and even fending off the mob. There are 12 gaud ly themed casino challenges to conquer. complete with high rollers and celebrities to attract. You'll even be able to sit down at your own high-stake tables and play blackjack and goker against some of the meanest gamblers on the strip. Roll those bones:





Ago, November

Our Intern's spindly arms nearly snapped under the

weight of this 446 page Issue. Zounds! But that was a different era: Our cover story featured 40. games that were simultaneously beating the RTS genre to death. We also had a 38-page sports gaming supplement. And-oef!the adst interplay alone bought 35 pages. These days interplay. collects soda cans along the highway to meet payroll.



Non Name Age: Hovember 1992 Last month's cover wasn't thus first time we. formented mankind with

our made-for-radio mugs. Ten years ago we "celebrated" our 100th Issue with one of the wallest covers ever. Our proud description: "...the rendering portrays Golden Emperor (publisher) Russell Sipe, vizier Johnny Wilson at left, proud cheft Ken Brown, and elven cakebearers Alan Emrich, Chris Lamburd, Dawn Themeson, and Mike Weksler," It's really not a party until you add a few elven cake-bearers



Years Ago, 1987 This issue featured the review of the first Leisure

Suit Larry game, inexplicably, popular, Larry appeared in a seamingly endless series of sniggering sequels, petering out, irenically, right before the comedy goldmine of Viagra, This issue also featured an ad for: Credit Card Christianity: The Game of Televangelism. Complete with a warning that the living God cannot be programmed into a computer. the game let you create your own televangelist and blik bellevers

# DELTA FORCE

# BLACK HAWK DOWN



Beginning with the humanitarian mission of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and concluding with the climactic battle of Mogadishu, Special Operations Forces got the job done.



For further into

יוויס בי בעלפט לוביע טוו געיעעע







NOVALOGIC



# Treasure Planet

Think of it as The Ancient Art of War in space By Tom Price

game based on a Disney license of an upcoming animated movie ordinarily wouldn't interest us much. A game like that would probably get flipped into the "I'll

get to this sometime after never' plie. But upon closer inspection during a little bands-on playing time, what we thought would be Treasure island in space reveals itself to be a fun and unique little RTS that's worth playing.

Currently in development by Barking Dog Studios (the same people who brought you Global Operations and Homeworld: Cataciysm what a we'rd ped gree ), Treasure Planet puts you at the helm of solar-sail-powered space ships that look a whole of like 18th-century saling vessels. Except in space. It sounds weird, out it looks pretty cool, and the gameplay, a though eschewing the traditional RTS base building and resource harvesting, is actually fairly deep. It's more of a tactical game, and it reminds me a lot of the classic Ancient Art of War at Sea, only Disneyl ed. And in space.

There is a single-player campaign, a basic skirmish mode in which you can control up to 12 snips, and of course multiplayer. over LAN and Internet. We were lucky enough to get our hands on some early code, and we have to admit we had a lot of fun. Don't dismiss Treasure Planet as a kid's game or a cheap movie tie in. It's more than that It's a swashbuckling good time.





# EXTENDED PLAY: HOMEBREW

By T. liyet Bakur

#### **Open-Source Gaming**

promeeringenuity, no commercial title can match the level of Innovation coming from eigen-source gaming projects. This month, i looked at a number of games that have benefited from giving everyone source code access. As so many people work on these projects at any given time, new content and bue fixed are introduced constantly.

#### FlightGoar

www.flightgean. Regulrest OpenGL graphics accelerator



FlightGear is a complete flight

simulator that has been under development to years and is constantly improving. Setting it wi takes a little technical know-how and a lot of dewnloads; but if you can get past that hump a lifetime of serial adventure awaits. The core physics engine is advanced enough that it is used in many aeredynamics research projects worldwide, and the graphics engine is completely customizable. New planes are being greated constantly, and the terrain maphics range from a plain (but accurate) map el the entire globe to photorealistic textures that would tax a 128MB video card

As the project's current moderator Curtim Class reints out, FlightGear contains hundreds of elements that add immensely to the sim's remism but aren't immediately apparent to easual ebserver for example, at night the stars are all where they are supposed to be, and the game follows a synlistic say/night cycle, A large community has coverallized around this deep simulation, so he sure to chack the related links at the Website

#### **Lagran**

WWW.recenni Requires: Pentium II or faster CPU OpenGL accelerator DirectX 6



from a famor the hyperrealistic physics any up by Grand Prix Legends, give Recer a try. The project still has a long way to go before every aspiron of driving a race car is implemented, but it's getting there. West of all, if there's anything you don't like an went to tinker with, you can customize nearly every hart of the sim by messing with simple ASCII files.

The main dewnland includes only a handful of care and a single track, but poke around the Website to find plenty of extras and links to other community sites. You can even create cars and tracks of your own, but you'll need an aditor like 3D Studie Max and a lot of experience to get started. The latest version as of this writing supports cars built out of as many as 3,000 polygons, so modeling vehicles isn't kid's stuff



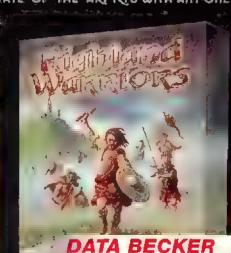
Let the fun begin.

EVENGE IS SWEET: BUT IT'S EVEN SWEETER WITH HIGHLAND WARRIORS' BRUTALLY FOWEREUL ATLAS 3D ENGINE, ADVANCED AT AND FULLY ECOMABLE CAMERAS THAT IMMERSE YOU IN ALL THE BLOODY MAYHEM OF medieval Scotland. Storm the fields of Bannockburn in this state-of-the-art RTS with any one

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Blend and Witnesse

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# HOW FAR WILL YOU GO?"



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- Computer Laming World

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Grow your character and your starship as you choose. Become powerful by succeeding in the challenges you enjoy the most, including combat, exploration, and trade activities. Choose from a variety of space-faring careers, each with its own unique blend of potent skills.

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The galaxy is populated by thousands of brave starship captains like you each with their own identities, motivations and unique skills. Team up on group adventures and reap the benefits of cooperative exploration, trade and combat.



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IT REINVENTS THE GAMEPLAY INTO SOMETHING COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT, YET JUST AS ADDICTIVE" — COMPSE

A MASSIVELY-MULTIPLAYER ONLINE RPG THAT ACTUALLY DEFERS SOMETHING DIFFERENT. THE UNIVERSE IS INDEED A MIRACULOUS PLACE." - UGD

# EARTH

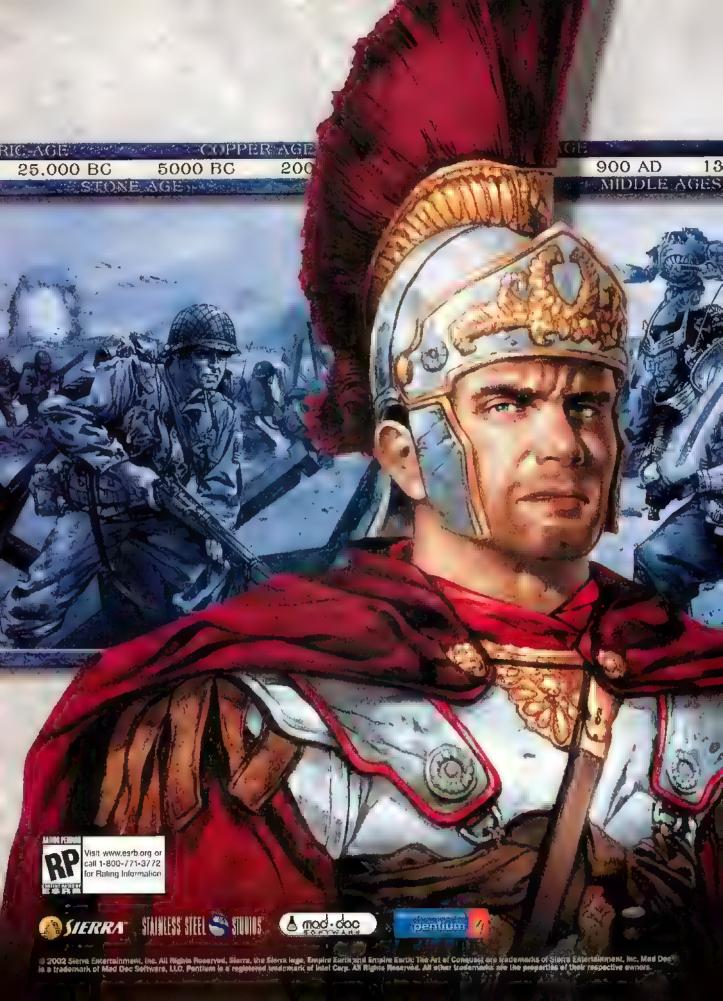
The online replaying

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# EXPANSION TO THE "PC GAME OF THE YEAR"

CATOMICAGE

-GameSpy

\*\*\* INDUSTRIAL AGE \*\* INFORMATION AGE:

TO MEERIAL AGE

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NANORGE



Three new campaigns. A universe to conquer.







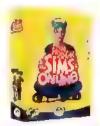
MORE EPICS. MORE ACTION. NO PRISONERS. Witness the rise of the Roman Empire from the front lines. Engage the enemy on the blood-soaked beaches of Iwo Jima in the WWII Pacific Theater. Lead a union uprising on a Mars settlement in an all-new Age of Space campaign. The "PC Game of the Year" went beyond the ages. Introducing the expansion of Empire Earth-The Art of Conquest. Further proof that EPIC is too small a word.

# THIS MONTH'S TOP 5

# THIS MONTH'S TOP 5

# PRE-ORDERS

# RELEASES



The Sims Online (EA Games)
Take your Sims to a multiplayer online world where
you get to be whoever you
want to be. Build a network
of friends from around the
world to enhance your power,
wealth, and social standing.
In this open-ended world,
you choose your role, your
attitude, and your destiny.



Everquest The Planes of Power (Sony Online Entertainment)
You will be introduced to an arching stary line through the Planes of Power, home of the gods of Norrath. Hundreds of new Items, quests, and encounters will keep even the most revered players challenged and enthralled.



The Lord of the Rings
The Fellowship of the Ring
(Wisedl Universal) Explore the
massive environments of
Middle Earth as one of the
Fellowship. Solve puzzles
and light enemies like
Orcs, Black Riders, and
an evil Bairog in the quest
to destroy the One Ring
of Power.



Age of Mythology (Microsoft)
Transport yourself to a time when heroes did battle with monsters of legend and the gods intervened in the affairs of mortal men. Wage war using human armies and diplomacy, enhance military and economic performance through resource gathering and trade.



Counterstrike: Cordit on Zera (Elera) This new standalone game extends the award-winning Counter-Strike multiplayer game with new maps, weapons, and more while simultaneously introducing new technologies, an extensive single-player campaign, and cooperative play.



The Sims Unleashed (EA Games) For the first time ever, you will give your Sims the chance to add a furry friend to the family. An expanded neighborhood with 15 additional residential lots and five community lots will give your Sims and their pets a variety of places to meet their neighbors.



Unreal Tournament 2003

Indiagrammat Using the latest
Unreal technology, UT2003
takes you to the merciless
serenss of the future,
where eithe warriors rely
on skills, speed, cunning,
and awesome firepower
to demonstrate their
style and become the
uttimate champion.



Earth and Beyond (EA Games)
This is the first online roleplaying galaxy, filled with
monsters and strange new
worlds. It is also home to
Ihousands of other players
from around the world. Allen
encounters, new discoveries,
perilous quests, diplomatic
backstabbing, and epic wars
await you and your friends.



Icawind Date II (interplay)
Continue the classic dungeon crawling experience of the first game. New races, classes, kits, Items and spells, and a horde of new monsters and areas to explore. Take pleasure in the joys of dual-wielding and new kits, like the Mercenary and the Dreadmaster.



Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos (Bitzzard Entertainment)
Four mighty playable races—
humans, orcs, night elves, and 
undead-compete in a finely 
balanced dance of conquest 
Combines the lessons searned 
from StarCraft, all the 
previous WarCrafts, and new 
3-D technology to create a 
vibrant strategy game.

All available now at the Computer & Video Games store at

amazon.com.

RANKINGS

# CGW Top 20

It's a world of WarCraft



StarCraft and Diablo II are still on the list, so who's surprised at WarCraft III?



Neverwinter Nights proves Canada has one valuable export.



The Sims, Vacation refuses to budge from its campsite.

tank	Last Monti	Game: purposervo en dominio de los que que en el experimento de la colonia.	Reting
1		, WarCraft III: Reign of Chaos ( (559, Vivend) Universal)	****
2	2	Neverwinter Nights (\$55, Infogrames)	****
<b>3</b>	1	The Sims: Vacation (\$29, Electronic Arts)	*AAAAAA
4	5	The Sims (S4), Electron c Arts)	****
<u>.</u>	В	Backyard Baseball 2003 (\$19, Infogrames)	NR
6	4	Grand Theft Auto III (S49, Take Z Interactive)	****
į	6	Medal of Honor Aliled Assault (\$45, Electronic Arts)	skololol
•	12	The Sims: Hot Date (\$28, Electronic Arts)	****
Í	17	The Sims: Livin' Large (\$28, Electronic Arts)	dakakak
0	7	WarCraft III: Collector's Edition (\$76, Vivend) Universa)	***
Ü	18	Microsoft Zoo Tycoon (\$27, Microsoft)	*****
2	19	RollerCoaster Tycoon Gold (S28, infogrames)	NR
3		RollerCoaster Tycoon (\$19, Infogrames)	****
*	20	Diable II: Lord of Destruction (S3I, Vivendi Jniversa)	****
S	5	StarCraft: Battle Chest (S20, Vivend Universal	NR
6	10	Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix (S43, Activision)	*******
7	-	Delta Force Task Force Dagger (\$28, NovaLogic)	NR
Ė		The Sims: House Party (\$29, Electronic Arts)	dokokokok
<b>9</b> 1	'n	Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast (\$48, LucasAris)	****
0	-	Backyard Basketball (S19, Infogrames)	NR

July retail sales results by NPD Intelect

Age of Mythology (Microsoft)

Call upon the gods to act on your behalf or reinforce your armies with more than 20 mythological creatures.

- New 3D engine adds a deep richness of graphical detail
- Unique new title based on the ancient curtoral history of the Greek, Norse, and Egyptian cultures
- Incorporates Ensemble Studios' trademark features from previous

Great Price! \$49:49 \$44.99 age of Empires games

GREAT DEALS ON



Win Diesel

Tirana garazata

& Dragons

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siar strolled mio a

Conflict Desert Storm (Take-Two Interactive)

You have been deployed deep behind enemy lines where the terrain and conditions are barbaric. Feetures

- · Survive 15 challenging missions each with multiple-path solution
- · Employ air-strikes, heavy artiflery and vehicles to hit your targets
- . Unprecedented Al governs enemy and squad behavior · Engage in day and night

The next installment in the best-selling, critically

acclaimed EverQuest series!

Up to 18 new planar zones

that push your teamwork ablitles to the limit

Hundreds of new items

Great Pricei \$49:র9 \$44.9%ombat with cyclic lighting



Everquest: The Planes of Power (Sony Online Entertainment)

Great Price! \$29.99

and monsters · Exciting new quests and challenges await even the most experienced players

. Central storyline links the content from every zone into one compelling quest



Everquest: Atfas (Suny Gniline Entertainment) Great Price! \$19.99

Never before has there been a book about EverQuest that is this extens ve. Features.

· A comprehensive collection of maps that will guide you on your questing adventure

- Over 170 detailed maps of the world of Norrath
- Includes the Planes of Power, this oulde will aid players throughout their adventures

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# best intentions, and everything in between by Rich Laporte

Here are our letest educated guesses as to when those games are actually stilpping. Keep in mind the rule of thumb: The further out a game, the more likely its date will change. For up, to the minute dates and releases, visit gonegold.com,



Star Trek: Star Fleet Command iji is on track for a November release according to Activision. This time around, the development team has focused on taking away the micromanagement of running your starship and has introduced a new interface for system management. Alse, for the first time in any Star Trek game, gamers will be able to "significantly customize their vessel's weapons, engines, shields, and other systems."



Interplay hopes to ship their next RPG; Lionheart, around mid-November. The game will use the SPECIAL rules system (the turn-based system used in the Fallout series), which the developer has adapted to a real-time funtacy sotting. The game includes a random item generator that can create thousands of weapons and items, spells that evalve and grow as your characters' ability increases, and a classiess system that allows for customized characters....



SimCity 4 is incredibly high on my musthave list and hopefully it will make its iste Nevember release. Finally making the move to 3D, the game looks sensational, and the gameplay, while similar to versions past, has been refined to be more intuitive and fun. Gamers are new welcome to import their Sims: character for feedback. Since you have a personal relationship with them, they'll tell you what they think of the area and how you, might improve it.

	-20-	
1503 A.B. The New World	EN Transfer	Q1 2003
Age of Mythology	Microsort	11/01/02
Asheron's Call 2	Microsoft	Q4 2002
Booman Vengeance	Ubi Soft	09/25/02
Battlefield 1942	ik	01/12/0
Call of Cthuthn	FishTank	01 2003
Dity of Hereo:	(Csett)	43 200
Civilization fil: Play the World	infogrames	10/30/02
Combat Flight Simulator 3	Microsoft	10/25/02
Combat Mission 2: Bartarossa ta Berlin	Big Time	03 200
Command & Conquers  Bonnouls	EK	01 200
Crusador Kings	Strategy First	11/06/0
Delta Force: Black Hawk Bown	ifovaLegis	10/24/0
Deus Ex 2	Eldos	Q7 2003
Divine Divinity	HIP	10/02/02
Doesn. III	Activision	TB
Oragon's Lair 30	Ubi Seft	03 200
Duka Nukam Forever	GOD Games	Unknow
Earth 2150: Lost Soula	Strategy First	09/04/0
Escape from Alcatron	HUP	02 200
Eve: The Second Genesis	Simon & Schuster	Q4 2007
EverQuest: The Planes of Power:	SORY	10/22/07
Everquest (	Sony	04 200
Preclamoor.	Microsoft	02 200
5.1. Combat	Strategy First	10/17/0
Shoot Marter	Empire	11/200
Gothic II	JoWaoD	04 200
feyemanî)	DreamCutches	11/15/0
Hadis &	Microsoft	02 200

Harpoon 4	Ubi Soft	04 2002
Heroes of Migh and Magic I Gathering Storm	1V: 300	09/25/02
Hidden & Dangerous 2	GOD Games	10/15/02
Highland Warriers	Data Becker	10/02/02
*Hitman 2	Eides	10/02/02
- Hanteworld 2	Sierra	TRA
IGI2: Covert Strike	Codemasters	11/20/02
Imperium Galactica III: Benezia	VCD	03 2002
Impossible Creatures	Microsoft	01 2003
Indiana Jones and The Emperor's Tonib	LucusArts	Q1 2003
James Bond 007: NightFire	E	11/20/02
Links 2000	Microsoft	89/20/02
Lionhoort 1	Interplay (	11/19/02
Lech On	Ubi Saft	12/20/02
SLogging Tycoon	Bushsoft	08/2004
Lords of the Realm iii	Sierra	TOA
- Monter of Orien IS:	Microprote	04 2002
HechWorler 4	Microsoff	02.2002
- Medal of Henor: Relead	EA	11/19/02:
Hascar Thunder 2003	EA .	10/23/02
INDA LIVO	EA Sports	04 2002
"Heed for Spend: Pursuit 2	EA ·	10/23/02
NHL 2003	EA Sports	09/18/02 -
No One Lives Forever Z	Fox Interactive	10/03/02
10.8.B	Strategy First	11/19/02
el Filmat State	son	DA 2002
Prestories	Dim	NZIME
of Fricance of Water	Codemasters	09/25/02
Pre Racer Driver	Codemasters	11/20/02

Project Hamnes - (8: 140	CDY. CT-STE S.	10/02/02
Species 45000 of 100000	Activision:	Unknown
Rainbaw Sig: Raven Shield	Uhi Saft	11/19/02
Republic: The Revolution	Erdos	11/15/02
Relierconster Tyceen 2	infogrames	10/09/02
Shadowbane, 4 cast 355	Uhi Seft	02 2002
Similary 4	EA	11/20/02
The Sims Online	EA ST D	10/25/02
The Sims Unleashed	EA	09/25/02
Delper system the	Ricat	09/20/02
Severelipi:	Somy	Unknown
Splinter Cell	RedStorm	11/28/02
Star Trek: Starffeet Command !!!	Activision	11/13/02
Star Trek: Elita Force II	Ritual Entertainme	nt 01 2003
Star Wers Oblanion	LucasArts	04 2002
Star Warst Knights of the Old Republic	LucasArts	Q3 2003
Stronyhold: Crusador	Take 2	09/11/02
SWAT: Urbun Justice	Sierra	10/30/02
Team Fortress 2	Sierra	TBA
Thinf III	Eidos	Q2 2003
Tiper Weeds PSA 2003	EA Sports	11/06/02
Tomb Raider: Angel of Durkness	Eirlas	11/20/02
Trun 2.0	Monalith	TBA
Onreal II	Infogrames	01 2003
Unreal Tournament 2003	Infogrames	04 2002
Warlands West of Application	SSC	12/11/02
World by WerCrest	Births	Bayachie
World War II	Codemasters	03 2002
Zeo Tycoen: Marine Mania	Microsoft	10/18/02

# LEFT BEHIND...

The third installment in the Earth 2150 series, Lost Souls is a 3D RTS voyage that has you scrambling for resources as you swear revenge on those who left you behind in a world that is set to crumble and vanish. The challenge is to make it out on time. The goal is to make it out alive,

- Three new, extensive campaigns with 30 original, nail biting missions.
- Map editor to create your own maps.
- Quick and easy tutorials take you through the basics of gameplay.
- Travel through several different countries for a variety of challenging environments.
- Over 25 multiplayer maps for LAN and Internet.

# and Trime IS Tricking away.













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Violence

BOME

AGENTS HAVE

A LICENSE

TO KILL.

DTHERS

ARE TOO BUSY

TO FILE THE

PAPERWORK.

GODEMASTERS COM



GENIUS AT PLAY



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CLERIS AT PLAY and present the control of the control of Saving Control of Co



# WE ARE

# FREEDOM'S ANSWER TO FEAR.

OUR DUTY BEGINS WHEN NEW TONS END

FOR WE DO NOT BARGAIN WITH TERROR

WE STALK IT CORNER IT TAKE ALM

AND KILL IT

WE ARE TEAM RAINBOW



The nather or all tactical shooters returns, in an all-new game focked and lighted to change the mace or action gaming. Adaly advance to a new devel of gaming realism with new high-tech gear to hunt the Tangos and 57 weapons to take them down. Experience unmatched graphical realism and high velocity multiplayer action powered by next generation Unreal technology. We wrote the book on tactical squad-based combat. Now we're rewriting it. Study up.



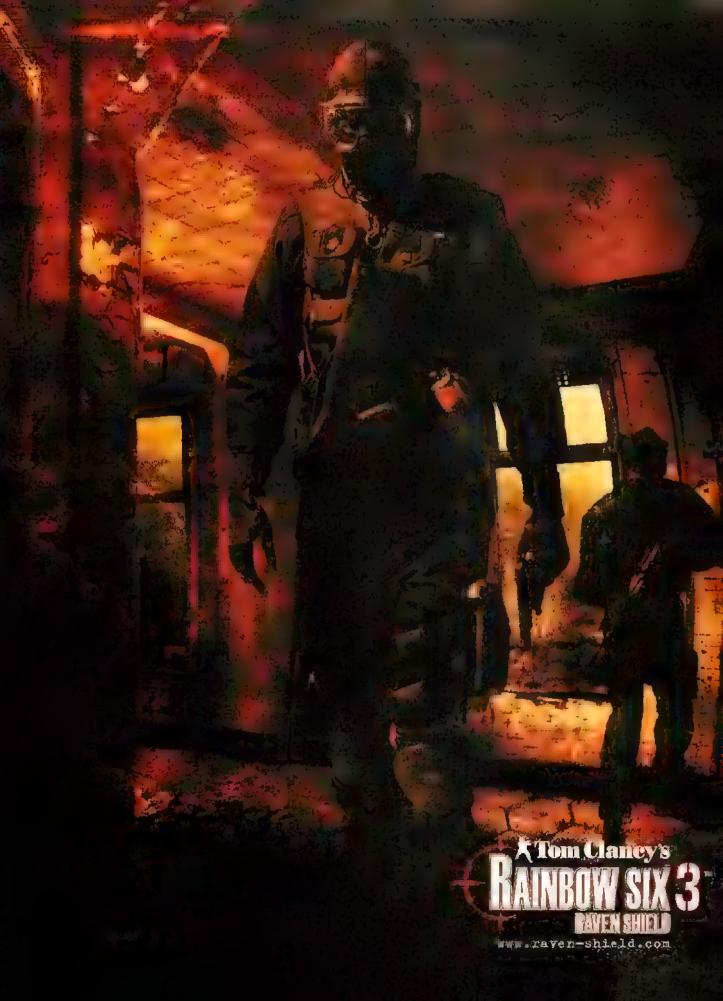
Blood Violence











7.62x35 (38)

searching

200

28/0

Hours and begreen and bearing to an important way to replanish amme, armor, and beatth.



tracks life our old friend the encouncilles



A hairmann can that converts to a welding torch is hotter than any Bond torc

NOLFZASPY

Banana peels, French mimes, fey Englishmen-what is this,

hen No One Lives Forever first arrived on PCs back in 2000, gamers were surprisedto find that it was not only a highly polished and innovative first-person shooter, but also that it; had a unique theme and direction that was as funny as it was stylish., CGW was pleasantly surprised enough to name NOLF the 2000. Action Game of the Year:

But if you think there are no surprises left in store for us fans of NOLF, well, you're wrong. In addition to an enhanced graphics engine-the latest incarnation of LithTech, called Jupiter-NOLF 2 is getting a number of gameplay enhancements to make Cate Archer's latest adventure even more shagalicious than the last...

The Sounds of Silence

If there was one thing that most played ers found fault with in the original.



# A trademark of the NOLF games—and all campy spy movies, for that matter-are the wacky gadgets.

NOLF, if was that stealth missions' were tee unforgiving. In NOLF 2, the first two levels rely heavily on stealth. but this time you can take a combative approach-just be prepared to face the consequences once the alarm has been sounded. Sound is a crucial ele-. ment of stealth missions, so the developers have paid a lot of attention. te it; yeu'll get plenty of silent weapons. When playing in an area like? the Japanese village at night, darkened doorways and alleys allew you to be rendered invisible as long as you don't move. It's a good trick to have, especially because the Al seems to bea lot tighter and much more clever.

Another big change to gameplay is: the introduction of an RPG-like skill points system. You gain skill points for accomplishing mission objectives, with additional points awarded for the completion of optional quests or finding a certain item or staying within mission parameters. For instance, in the Siberia mission, you can earn skill points for not killing too many Russian guards. You can avoid killing them by hitting.

them with tranquilizer darts and sleeping gas, but don't forget to take their. weapons from them or they'll come after you when they wake up. When you acquire skill points, you apply them to one of several categories like stealth, stamina, er marksmanship..

Exploding Kittles

NOLF's signature brand of humor is back as well. One of the best parts of the original game was sneeking around and listening to the incidental conversations of quards and other people. When I first played through NOLF, I would actually wait to take someone out until I was done eavesdropping. In NOLF 2, the hilarious conversations are back, and you can talk to other friendly characters, sometimes just to hear what funny: topic they'll digress inte.

Another trademark of the NOLF games-and all campy spy movies, for that matterware the wacky gadgets, and Cate Archer uses many on her missions. Mostly based on items commenly found in a weman's purse, they Include thimps like a lightick comers, and



Good thing it takes a long time to spell "Kalashnikov" in the snow-otherwise we might not have enough time to sneak up en tids guye,.

hall dipper lockpick, and a heirspraycan welding torch. There are also some bizarre weapons like bananas: and exploding robot kittles.

No One Lives Forever Z is one of our most enticipated games, and this little hands-on taste has made me realize. that we'll be getting not just more of what we all loved in the first game, but a whole lot of new stuff to boot, a

GAME STATS

PHINKS Fox Interactives DEVELOPER: Monolith: SHIRE Action URL notf2.sferra.com ALLEASE PATE: 04 2002.

# JARNS V

Cirque du Soleil? By Tom Price





This is the new way to sung a contrast: Hy to a system, son which missions are available, and sign up. How you finish carilor missions determines which new ones become available to you.



The basic engine remains the same, so modern machines can new run MechWarrier in its full spiender.

# MECHWARRIOR 4

New and old school put together By Thierry Nguyen

icrosoft is going totally. old school with the MechWarrior franchise, The latest MechWarrior game will play homage: to what is widely considered the best mech game ever, MachWarrier II: Mercenaries. MechWarrior 4: Mercenaries (apparently Arabic numerals are the thing in this age) will be a massive, redesign of MechWarrior, from its appearance to its gameplay.

in single-player, you start by choosing a sponsoring company; your choices include the Northwind Highlanders, Gray Death Legion, Wolf's Dragoons, and Kell Hounds. Each company has its advantages and weaknesses-for example, the Northwind Highlanders have early access to LostTech but start with fewer funds, and the Gray Death Legion has more starting funds but a higher operating expenses. These companies allow gamers to form their

a big, slow weapon designed to take out big, slow mechs. If you don't have: enough money for the Free Market, you can try salvaging from the field.

A first in Mercenaries will be the ability to command a secondary lance; hence you'll have control over seven other pilots in the field. You can coordinate assaults more affectively, because four other guys will be available to sheet everything around. You'll want to save some cash to hire veteran pliots for all of your, missions.

You earn meney by finishing missions and their bonus objectives. Repair and maintenance expenses are deducted once avery cycle, which is roughly equivalent to a week. Sometimes jumping between two planets might take a couple of cycles... A quick way to earn cash without advancing the compaign is to fight inthe Solaris VII Celiseum. There, yeu choose a weight class and fight in a



If you can afford it, you can now take a second lance Into a mission, letting you control a total of eight macks in the field.

With all sorts of planet bupping pains on, you'll pass through environments such as swamps, cityscapes, deserts, and the chilly Arctic.

# Fight in a big gladiatorial free-for-all, complete with sports-style commentary and cash prizes.

ewn mercenary sutfit but still be associated with the most famous. mercenary companies from the BattleTech universe. In multiplayer, Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone will track statistics for players and companies. Hopefully players will notice the mercenary companies being: tracked and form clan groups around these official standings. Additionally, multiplayer participants can now restrict mecks by C-bill cost, not just weight.

# No Free Launchers

Cost is a big factor in the Free Market (first seen in the Black Knight expansion), and new the Free Market has, been expanded to let you trade in weapons, mechs, and pilots. That includes every mech from Mech-Warrier 4 and Slack Knight, the optional inner Sphere and Clan expansion packs, and 10 brand-new mechs. New weapons include the rotary autocannon, which has a faster; firing rate but is prone to jamming, and the Arrow IV missile, which is,

big gladiatorial free-for-all, complete with sports-style commentary and different cash prizes awarded according to your ranking...

Read the Book, Play the Movie Rather than a linear campaign, expect an expanded version of the branching introduced in Black Knight, Missions are unlocked when you complete other: missions, but you're not forced to play them in any preset order. You can use your dropship to travel among starsystems and pick up missions as they. become available,

The developers worked closely with: FASA Studios and got an advance: peek at some of the upcoming ButtleTech novels. As a result, key events within the universe will be depicted in the game around the same time it premieres in the fiction; in fact, a huge, climactic battle that the next few nevels lead up to will be the, scene of a playable mission in Mercenaries. In the grander conflict between Steiner and Davion, some missions will align you with a. 🕳

particular house. It is possible, however, to stay perfectly neutral in the big conflict, which could result. In three possible endings.

Cyberiors has been doing solid work with the MechWarrior franchise, and Merceneries looks like a great standalone addition before the inevitable MechWarrior 5 (or V?) pops up. Save your C-bills for Mercenaries when it. ships this winter.

# MERCENARIES

# GAME STATS

Publishish Microsoft NEVELOPEL Cyberiore HILL Sel-fi sim URL: www.cyberlore.com /games/mw4mercs/ mw4mercs.html SELEASE BAIR Winter 2002







Yes can exist now recilities like rader towers and airReids. Redar gives a combat benus to units in the area. Airfields function the same as airports, but don't require you to build a city.

# CIVILIZATIONIII:

Major expansion adds new cultures and units, multiplayer support,

then there are Expansions, and then there are Expansions. The former add a smattering of new units and quame types ar levels; the latter reignite yeur smeldering interest and turn it into a raging wildfire all over again. They make you wonder how you were able to play the game befere the expansion. Play the World is one of those kinds of additions; an addictive addition,

If you want to play Civilization iii multiplayer, you'll need to have the add-on. But even those who are less interested in multiplayer will find plenty of new features to make it worth their while.

## New Stuff

For starters, there are eight new civilizations to play with, each with its own unique unit, attributes, and leaders. Managing units like Viking Berserks, Mongol horse-mounted archers, and Korean rocket carts (an early Katyusha-type weapon) should mix thims are a bit and give you a few

of these elements will help add variety, and depth to both single-player and multiployer senes.

Firaxis has also added a few features to reduce repotitive tasks, particularly later in the game. Stack movament lets you move entire stacks of units together (at the rate of the slowest one), eliminating rapeat orders. Auto-bombardment orders allowers to repeatedly bomb a target every turn, and raily points help you muster units mere efficiently.

# Multiplayer Modes

Because semers have different playing styles, Firaxis decided to offer three multiplayer options: turn based, simultaneous turn, and turnless. Turnbased is closest to the single-player game but can take more than 12 or even 14 heurs to play all the way through. If you want to spend your evenings waiting for some dimwit to take a turn, that style of play is your best option.

Simultaneous-turn play is better, but's it still extalls a waiting period if

# FOREICE ADVISOR Arter bridge and a service of the service of the

A look at the new great leaders. Why does Coughis Kham look like he's peopling?



A Kerean recket cart opens up a can of whup-age on a warrier...

# The new "turnless" mode is an ingenious solution for multiplayer.

new bruises an your buttocks. New core units have been added as well, including querrillas and medieval infantry. The querrilla allows obsolete units (like swordsmen in the modern era) to upgrade to something useful. Guerrillas are expensive, but they require no resources to build; they are good for herassing opponents when you don't have the resources to build conventional military units.

All of the new units have splify animations, particularly the cengular tadors, who have dogs that attack with them. Some of the original units animations have been enhanced as well; slege engines new have soldiers to maneuver them around.

Other improvements include a stock exchange, commercial docks, and civil defense functions. A new wender, the internet, will provide the equivalent of a research lab in every city. Plus there are new facilities such as airfields and radar towers that can have a major affect en your military capability. All

one player takes lenger than the rest. Turnless is Firaxis's innovative solution to the waiting presiem. In turnless mode, the action never really stops, but unit movements are ilmited, by a turn cleck. You can meve a unit ence per round; after you move it, you have to wait until the clock cycles through one revolution before you can move it again. You can set the length of the turn cleck to suit your taste, but it automatically lengthens later in the game to give you more time to move all of your units.

Although the turn clock helps speed play, a full game can still take hours to get through. So the team has added six new short game medes for people who want to get a quick game in during their lunch heur. One example is regicide, where each player has a king, which is a physical unit (like Abe Lincoln for the Americans), and each other civilization aims to take the king down. Once your king is gone, you're out—the game is short and sweet.

Other metagames include mass regicide, in which you have to kill all the given units of your opponent; elimination, in which players lose, when one of their cities is captured; and several modes that declare a winner based on the accumulation of victory points.

And if all of the above isn't enoughfer you, Firaxis will also be bundling a powerful editor and med management utility with Play the Werld. These teels will make it easy for users to create, download, and sort custom scenarios. And to get you started, they're including new unit types such as World Wer II, medieval Japanese, and even illnosaurs.

It couldn't be clearer that the folks at Firstis are looking to reward their loyal fans. With such a large mix of new units, features, and abilities, this Civ III expansion should keep you raising armies and rezing cities long into the future.

## GAME STATS

PUBLISHER Infogrames.

DEVELOPER Firmals

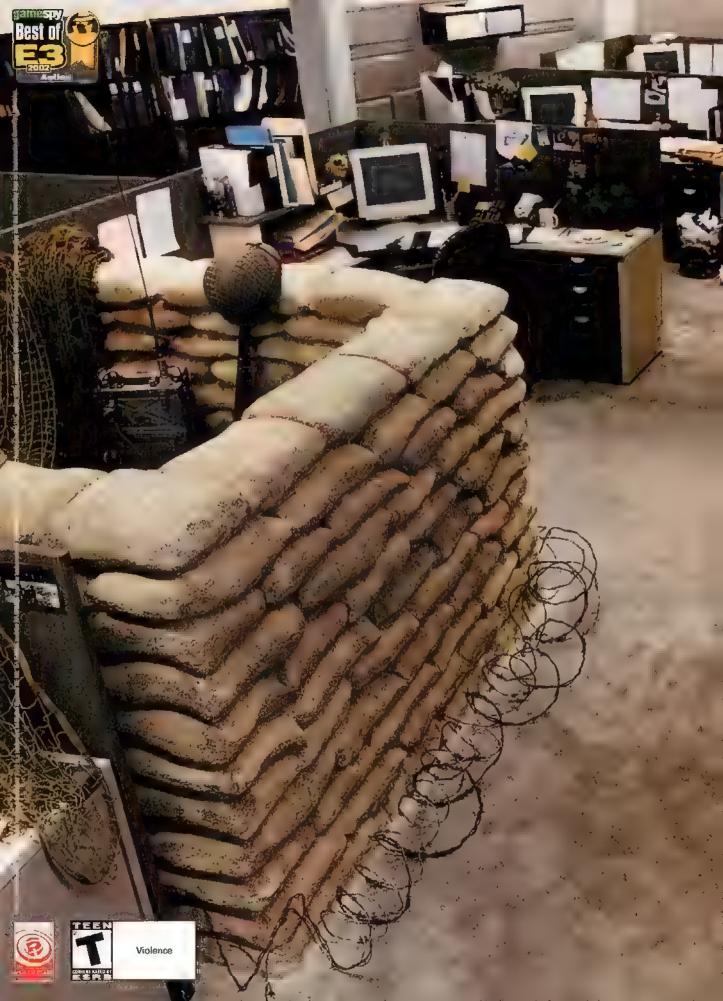
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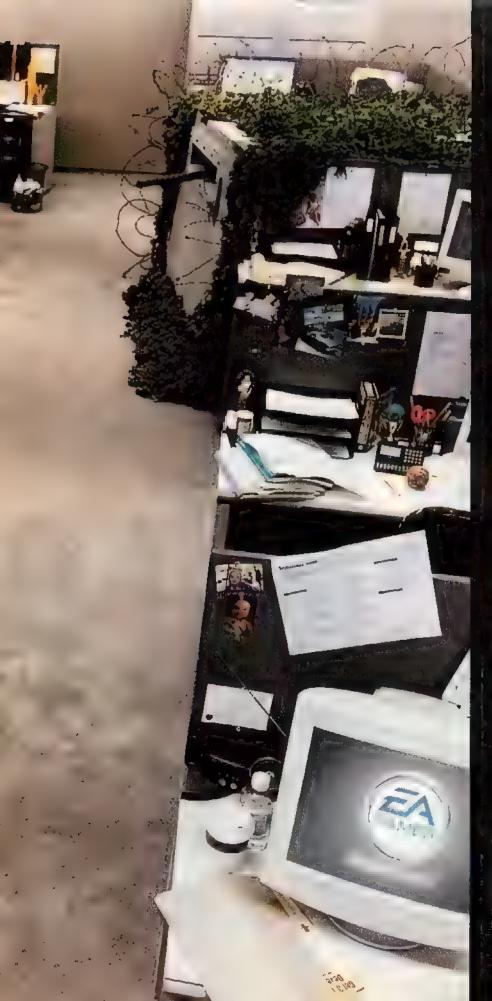
DRI: www.civ3.com

RELEASE DUE. Q4 2002

# PLAY THE WORLD

an editor, and more By Ken Brown







84 fearless players



95 hell-ruising vehicles:



20 deadly weapones



4 treacherous campaigns.

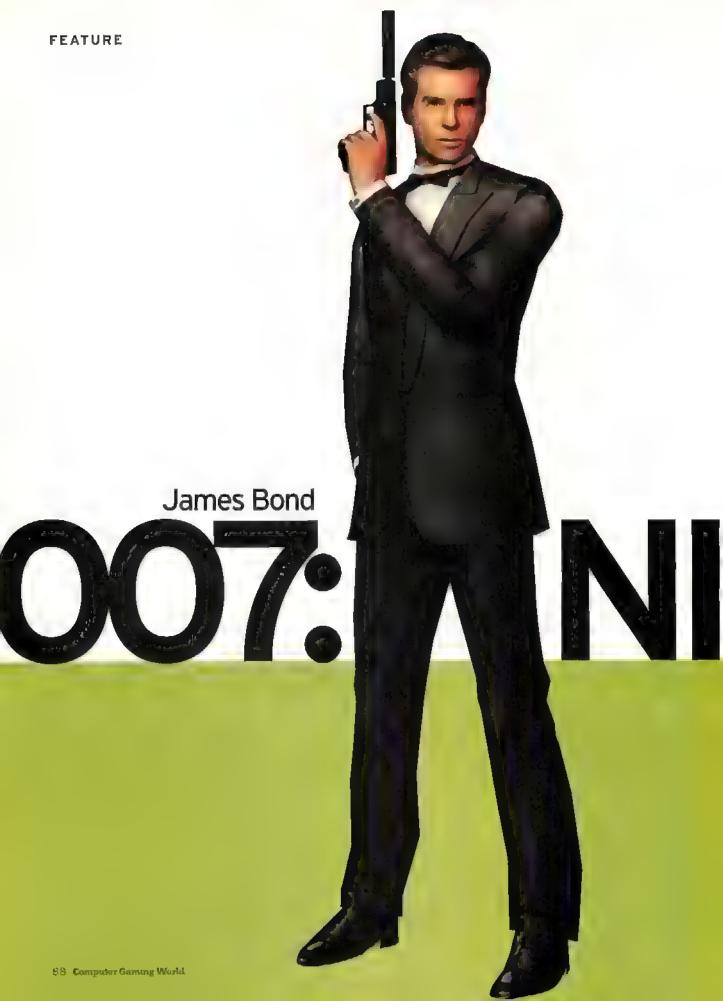


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# BATTLEFIELD

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JAMES
BOND
FINALLY
HAS A
LICENSE
TO KILL
ON THE PC
BY KEN BROWN







# BOND, JAMES BOND,

Say those three words and no matter who your favorite actor is (as if there was any doubt) everyone knows who you're talking about, Ian Fleming's 007 was the original superspy: a sophisticated man's man who can sociatize with the world's elite one minute, and then save us from their diabolica, plans the next. He can out-drive, out-ski, and outsmart anyone-equally adept playing baccarat or hopping in a jet and taking off amidst a storm of builets and rockets. He never fails, he always looks good, and he always gets the girl.

Since 1962, when Dr No first introduced audiences to Bond, there have been 22 films with the suave secret agent, all boasting exotic locations, wild chase scenes, killer gadgets that actually kill, and some of the most beautiful women ever to appear onscreen. The movies defined a new genre of spy thriller, while spawning books, video games, accessories, and, of course, that international Man of Mystery, Austin Powers, in the process, Bond entertained millions and made a lot of people rich.

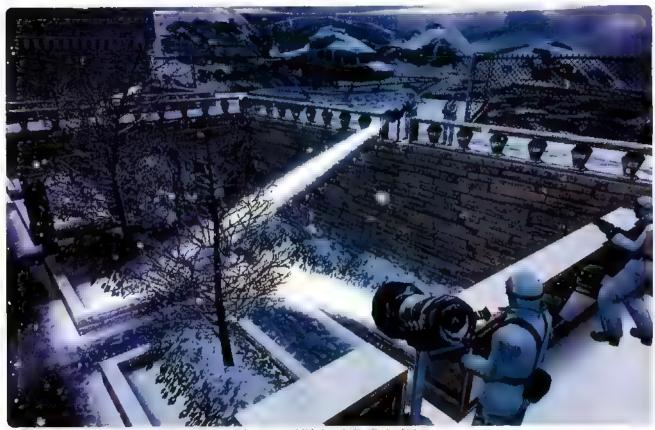
Yet there's never been a PC game that let you slip into his Italian toafers. Why? Given his ongoing popularity, and the fact that most boys between the ages of 9 and 90 secretly wish they were him, he's a ready-made action game hero. Electronic Arts snapped up the exclusive interactive rights to Bond Iono ago, releasing numerous console games (that have never surpassed Rare's GoldenEye on the N64 for sheer gaming br Bance). But EA obviously never thought they could make enough money on a PC version before now. So the very fact that the world's largest video game company has decided to create a custom PC version of NightFire-complete with full multiplayer capability-is great news for computer players.

Too bad EA didn't quite go all the way, but we'll hold our gripes for the moment.



# FROM CONSOLES, WITH LOVE

NightFire is being developed simultaneously for several platforms. and all games are scheduled to launch around the same time as the newest Bond film, Die Another Day, which comes out on November 22. Gearbox Software is in charge of the PC version, which is good because they have a great track record, with games like Half-Life Blue Shift, Counter-Strike (boxed version), and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 to their credit. (Gearbox is also currently



Getting past the quards at the Austrian castle won't be easy-and this is only the first mission.



mains who put the hero in. I borate pention in their grand . Instead of just shutting up and putting a bullet in Bond's head Bond, M. 's quick rendown of the Bond films that he is not shape the franchise and our expectations.



DIL NO (IDSZ) JAMES BOND: RELAIN IS BENT ON

**EUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME** 

MEMORABLE MOMENT

THEME SONG



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (1963)

INDELS BUND

VILLAIN IS BENT ON

LUDICRODS BOND GIRL NAME:

MEMORABLE MOMENT

THEME SONG BY.



Multiplayer support is what will set NightFire for the PC above all other versions, Geerbox's experience with Counter-Strike should pay off here. Development Director experience with our past team-based multiplayer modes and we'll be including deathmatch, team deathmatch, capture the flag, and a surprise mode or two focusing on the fiction of being a spy, Of course, multiplayer Bond just wouldn't be right without team modes based on Michaels Phoanix, or good guys versus bad."

He adds, "Gadgets will facter into the modes of play significantly, and I think this will bring a new flavor to

multiplayer not seen recently," With cool toys like X-ray plasses that let you see through walls and auto-targeting suitcase que turrets-not to mention weapons like grenade isunaners and shoulder-fired missiles multiplayer could turn out to be something very special. Players will be able to choose from among a large

variety of skins, including several famous characters from the films. LAs marketing says that NightFire draws on characters and scenes from 40 years of Bond films, but this is what they really mean; you can look like Oddjob or Jaws in multiplayer. We'd be thrilled if those characters could perform special attacks based on their film abilities, but EA's not promising anything at this points it may be left to the mod makers to carry out

working on Halo: PC and Counter-Strike: Condition Zero.)

The games share many of the same plot points and objectives, but each version will have features unique to the plat form. The console versions will have driving levels featuring the new 12-cylinder, \$229,000 Aston Martin Vanguish (for which there's already a waiting list in real file), equipped with weapons and gadgets. Unfortunately, the closest PC players get to the Vanguish is seeing it in a cinematic cut-scene. But at least we'll have 32-player multiplayer support that lets you choose skins of famous Bond characters like Oddjob and Jaws.

The PC version will also have some exclusive single-player levels, says associate producer Michael Condrey. These include a decommissioned nuclear power plant, a South Pacific subterranean assembly faculty, and an Austrian airfield





O's gadgets are integral to each mission. In addition to a spy camera, you'll get a PDA that decrypts codes to open locked doors.

# THE TEAM IS WORKING TO INCLUDE FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN MULTIPLAYER, INCLUDING KILLERS LIKE ODDJOB AND JAWS.



# GOLDFINGER (1964)

LAMES GOND

VILLAPAIN BEAT ON

STEEL AND EAST FOR THE REAL

MEMORADLE NOMENT. REPORT A POS

THEME SONG BY: THE SYSTEM





# THUNDERBALL (1965)

JAMES BOND: "T Go, To,

VILLAIN IS BENT ON: 100

LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME: 41 6 36

MEMORABLE MOMENT: - Sale - Selection

THESE SOME BY HEREFORD



## YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (1967)

MES JOS. CONTRACTOR

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THEME SONG BY: 1, 1

# CASINO ROYALE (1967)

JAMES BOND: 4 TOPS

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LUDICROUS BOND DIRL NAME: 30 10

MEMORABLE MOMENT: 164 2 2 2 10

THEME SONG BY:



The game features an all-new story that pits Bond against "green industrialist" Rafael Drake, Drake's company is involved with dismantling warheads and disposing of nuclear waste, but he's actually a radical environmentalist. Drake employs his secret stash of ICBMs and a private army of astronaut comman dos to assault a U.S. space weapons platform and hold the world hostage. We're not sure why an environmentalist would

threaten the world with nuclear annihilation, but what the hell- it's Bond, And Bond is once again the only thing between a power-crazed maniac and global domination.

# NO ONE DIES TWICE

The game opens with a dramatic cut-scene remin scent of Bond's HALO jump into the South China Sea in Tomorrow Never Dies, This time, he eaps from the back of a C-140 and parachutes into the Austrian Alps. His mission; infiltrate Rafael Drake's ornate castle, chat up some women.

and find out what Drake's up to. Each mission is bookended with cinematic scenes to help set the tone. They reminded me of the cut-scenes from Rainbow Six; Roque Spear, only with higher-resolution models.

When Bond lands on a snow-covered bridge facing the castle, you're in control. Right away the game evokes an authentic feel as you face an imposing castle that's protected by armed guards. Falling snow adds to the atmosphere.

Gearbox is using a new engine for NightFire that has endured far beyond its roots in Half-Life. It draws huge scenes with complex architecture and weather effects, and effectively handles the many scripted events scattered throughout the game.

One of the best features of NightFire is the variety of ways to complete each mission. In the Castle mission, you can hopon a passing truck and ride it into the compound, sneak around to a side door, and burn the lock off with a laser beam from the watch that O gave you. Or you can head into the woods to go around the castle and enter through a secondstory window, Each of the different paths throughout the game will yield a very different experience: some will require slealth, some will simply require a head-on assault

In another mission, Bond has to infiltrate a Japanese country estate (also protected by ub quitous guards with



You can play each mission differently, but sometimes you'll have to shoot it out-hence the whole "license to kill" concept.



in one of the team-based levels, Bond has to help his partner stay alive by picking off guards with the sniper rifle.

# ONE OF THE BEST FEATURES IS THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO COMPLETE EACH MISSION.



ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE (1969)IAMES BOND

VILLAIN IS BENT

LUDICRODS BOND GIRL NAME:

MEMORABLE MOMENT



DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER (1971)

JAMES BONO:

VILLAIN IS BENT

LUD. CROUS BOND GIRL NAME: ALTER

MEMORABLE MOMENT: 📲



LIVE AND LET DIE (1973) JAMES BOND:

VILLAIN IS BENT ON:

LUDICROUS BOND

GIRL NAME: 35

MEMORABLE MOMENTS & TAUS

THE MAN WITH THE **GOLDEN GUN** (1974)JAMES BOND

LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME

MEMORABLE MOMENT

THEME SONG BY

THEME SONG BY-

THEME SONG BY





# The war is far from over!

'Solid premise, solid presentation ... The hopes for Sudden

Strike 2 are certainly high

"With its richly detailed and historically accurate units, the game will appeal to all fans of WWN games"



- Five powerful campaigns with more than 40 breathtaking missions
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he world is an enormous battlefield, and you're on the front line, in the enter of realistic WWII strategic battle action! Command German, Russian, British, American or Japanese troops and fight on water, land and in the air o destroy your enemies and win the war!









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For further information please see our website:























# HE CAN CLAMBER ACROSS THE ROOF, SHOOT HIS WAY THROUGH THE HOUSE, OR SNEAK IN ON A WIRE.

submachine guns). He can clamber across the roof and drop down into a courtyard, shoot his way through the house, or enter via a wire suspended across the garden. To go by wire, Bond must first shoot the lanterns hanging from it, each of which leaves a sparking section of exposed wire; the challenge is to time Bond's crossing over these sections (when they aren't sparking) while watching for patrolling guards (he can't shoot if he's holding onto the wire). This becomes a very tricky and fairly suspenseful moment in the game.

it also illustrates how the player's perspective changes from first to third person at certain times in the game. The camera

often switches to third person when Bond is outside a building, to give the player a view of others in the area. By using this perspective, you can see which windows have guards in them, so you'll know when to make Bond crouch or move away. It should add that extra bit of suspense players expect from a spy game.

# DON'T CALL US "HENCHMEN"

Until now we've talked about guards as if they are all the same. Actually, they're not. Some guards and enemy soldiers may look similar, but almost every character will have unique fac al-



THE SPY WHO LOVED ME (1977)

JAMES BOND

MEAN IN RENT

INDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME

MEMORABLE HOWENT

THEME SONG BY



MOONRAKER (1979)

JAMES BOND

VILAIN IS BENT ON

LUCIOROUS BOND

CIRL NAME: - THE PROPERTY OF

MEMORABLE MOMENT; THE WARD

THEME SONG BY



FOR YOUR EYES ONLY (1981)

VILLAM IS BEHT

LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME: THE MCMORABLE MOMENT: - OTTO IT

GIRL NAME:

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

THEME SONG BY: THE LOW

OCTOPUSSY

JAMES BOND.

V LLAIN IS BENT ON

LUGICROUS BOND

(1983)







features, and some of them will have very smart Al. Landon Montgomery, development director at Gearbox Software says, "We've enhanced the Al system that we've worked with in the past and implemented cool new Al behaviors." For example, if an enemy enters into combat with you and has access to a corner, he will run to that corner and use it as cover. You'll find that the enemies in NightFire also have survival instincts, even reacting to live grenades in a logical fashion, (Is he close enough to kick it away? Close enough to throw it away? Close enough to throw it at you?) As James Bond, you're definitely going to have your hands full with these guys.

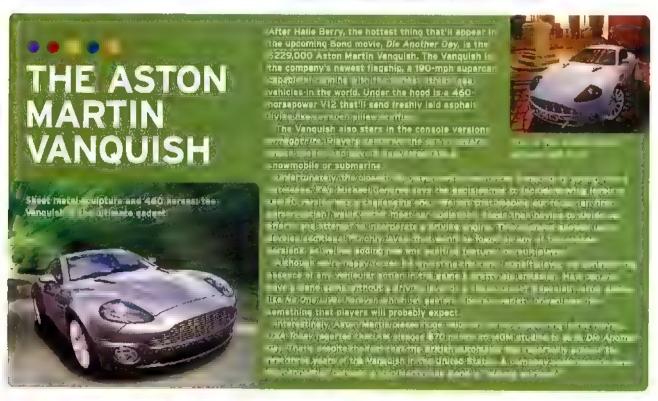
The enemies with the toughest AI will probably be Draxe's Black Ops soldiers. Dressed all in black, these guys pack silenced MP5s, so you may not hear them even after they start shooling at you. Even if you can sneak up on them, they have katanas and a variety of jumping moves that will make them very tough to deal with.





"James, is that a pistol in your pocket, or...?" There'll be plenty of babes for Bond to cavort with.

But you won't always have to go it alone. A staple of every Bond film is the gorgeous Bond girl who helps 007 with his mission, and the developers haven't overlooked that. Bond teams up with a couple of agents in NightFire, including Zoe.





NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN (1983)

JAMES BOAD

VILLA R IS LERY ON EXPERIMENTATION

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# A VIEW TO A

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LUDICROUS BOND SIRL NAME: 12 1991

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# LICENCE TO KILL (1989)

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LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME: "

MEMORABLE MOMENT: () TO

How on earth can this gelsha thank Bond for rescuing her?



Bond's high-rise climb is an example of the third-person action sequences.



The Japanese estate is a beautiful place, complete with kol ponds.

Nightshade, who originally appeared in EA's Agent Under Fire In one of the missions unique to the PC, Zoe has to make her way into an aircraft control tower to disable a security system so the two can escape. When she gets ambushed by swarming quards, Bond has to pick them off with a sniper rifle from a nearby building.

# WHERE DOES HE GET THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS?

Naturally Bond will be packing his standard Walther pistol, but he'll have a lot more weapons at his disposal. These include flashbangs, smoke and frag grenades, various rifles, a grenade launcher, and a four-tube missile launcher. Each weapon also has an alternate fire, such as a silencer for the pistol, a scope for the rifle, and a three-round burst for the submachine quin. In alternate fire mode, the missile launcher switches to a nosecam view and lets you steer it to your target

Of course it wouldn't be a Bond experience without an assortment of sophisticated and deadly gadgets. Unfortunately, Desmond Llewelyn is pushing up the daisies, but there will be a suitably gray-haired virtual Q who equips Bond with his toys. Among these are a watch equipped with a laser beam, a stun gun lighter, a cell phone grappling hook, and some special grips that enable Bond to scale buildings. My favorite is a suitcase that turns into a machine gun turret when dropped; it'll automatically mow down any target within its range

Bond will also carry a tricked-out pair of glasses. They have

three modes: night vision, infrared, and X ray, The infrared mode reveals body heat to detect guards through certain kinds of walls and doors. X-ray mode lets you see concealed objects in people's clothing. Yes, they also let you peep at women's underwear. Curiously, this doesn't work on men-ltreveals only their skeletons. It's odd and totally sexist, but then again, it is Bond,

# BOND IN SPAAAAAAAAAAAAAACE!

If there's one thing that shouldn't disappoint anyone it's the variety of locations in the game and the amount of detail that seems to be avished on them. The Austrian castle has an amazing amount of detail, from paintings on the wall to perfectly ruffled curtains and ornate columns. Reflective floors and lighting add even greater ambiance to this level.

In addition to the castle, players will infiltrate a Tokyo high rise, rescue beautiful geisha held hostage in a Japanese country estate, blast their way through a fortified jurigle base, penetrate an underwater South Pacific training facility, and maneuver through a zero-gravity space station. In the space station, Bond and his enemies float and gilde through the air. which offers a completely different challenge from the rest of the dame

We're not sure if the game ends there, but as it's assured that Bond gets the girl in the end, we hope it does, if only for the opportunity to hear one more time:

British minister; "My God, what's Bond doing?!" Q: "I think he's attempting re-entry, sic"

# IT WOULDN'T BE A BOND EXPERIENCE WITHOUT AN ASSORTMENT OF SOPHISTICATED, DEADLY GADGETS.



GOLDENEVE (1995)JAMES BOKO:

VILLAIN IS BENT ON: DISSIPAU

LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME: KERRY

MEMORABLE MOMENTS ITE

THEMS SONG BY



# PARTHUMAN **NEVER DIES** (1997)

JAMES BOND

VILLAIN IS RYNT ONSSTERVING

LODICROUS BOND GIRL NAME: SETP

MEMORABLE MOMENT

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (1999)

AMES BOND

VILLAIN IS BEAT ON

LUDICROUS BOND GIRL NAME

MEMORABLE MOMENT: DEPETTE GO

THEME SONG BY



DIE ANOTHER DAY (2002)

JAMES BOND:

VILLAMI IS BENT ON:

TUD.CROUS BOND

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

THEME SONG BY:

THEME SONG BY

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# TURNS TURNS TORNS ONLINE

FIVE YEARS AGO,

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# BY THIERRY NGUYEN HOTOGRAPHY BY ARNOLD TLOSE IO



managed to dig itself out the green was prepared for it, but the managed for its prepared od), justicing a surers of sense of the meet important MMO see pla ground, join plays together (such as of the UO Fen Faire) and males as strong surebers to this day.

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enjoyment, and loyalty"?

Lead designer forn "Evocare" Criticon be lieves, "It was primarily the sheer determination on the part of thousands of Uo players that allowed UO to survive its early stages and become a success....The





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# RMER EDITOR IN CHIEF JOHNNY LSON ON THE UO LAUNCH



|Uitima Online was more than a graphical MUD and more than a multiplayer version of the classic Ultima series. it was a grand vision, a glorious social experiment...and it was flawed. I remember the first time I logged on. There were lots of characters in the first tovern I visited and the conversational fonts flowed all over the screen like a Jackson Pollock painting.

aise remember walking through the woods and encountering tons of pieces of furniture piled up because the characters wanted the experience for making the furniture but didn't vant to wait in line at a store in order to sell it. The in-game virtual economy didn't work nearly as well as the out-of-game virtual economy in which characters were suddenly werth hundreds and thousands of dollars. Most of all, I remember the backhanded "honor" of having a special slime creature named after me. The "jwilson slime" appeared in the game shortly after Computer Gaming World gave Ultima Online the Coaster of the Year award. Frankly, I didn't mind being called a slime, but this slime duited your weapons, I really hated being called dult, even indicactiv





This is the life that grips the ice that grips the show that grips the grips the toad you're about to slide off or

Get down and effer in the happoors "wheel to wheel' action of Relaycross and los Repling. Shar to the clouds his Hill Climb or elide your way to glony in specificnal fluily stages. Tear up 48 tracks in four different Rally event types Choose from 29 vehicles to drive and amen, into including outlewed Group "8" care like the Audi Quarto Si and this MG Metro, 6R4. And humiliate up to three other players at a line in network mode.





Where the rubber leaves the road.















Lord British killed in the beta Everyone remembers this virtual asessination, even though it happened in the beta, it resulted in the assassin being banned for taking advantage of exploits n the system, even though he claimed to have been role-playin**g.** 

The fall of the city of Trinsic The fall of the city of the Perhaps the greatest moment in UO history, when a swarm of undead overran a popular player-filled city—the kind of stuff that makes up emotionallyresonant climaxes in war movies.

Uftime Online: The Third Dawn The addition of a new 3D client split the community in half and created technical support headaches for Origin upon launch.

The housing expansion of Trammel Thousands of players logged in and waited until dawn for the new land to open, so that they could claim choice real estate for their house. Unfortunately, the crowd resulted in a server crash.

The Virtues Designer Jonathan Hanna brought about Uitima's most defining feature: The Seven Virtues Even without Garriott, the game had finally become Uttleta, online.

pungieman-Dayls, a ive-year UO veteran and longtime memben of the player community.

CHILDREN OF UO Origin managed to repair the wreckage from the Initial release, which attract ted and kept in

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The transfer of the second 20 10 1 The state of the s

learned from players, I feel privileged to nave been involved in giving them the toels they needed to make their experience what they wanted, humbled by what they did, and deeply serry for all the many areas where we tried to give them a good expe-





rience and falled. Those lessons shape everything it is a stand Gordon Walton, executive producer of The Sime Orline rese on his experience as the executive produce it of Ultimes of "I learned many things from the experience of operation as entertainment service of that scale, and taled learned from the passion of the audience. Hearned how harm to see to change play ers' impression of a game once it was set as Jaune caven if ye addressed the key issues. I learned have been a to make changes at a sustainable rate in a large and complex service and rounded. I learned a lot about auality and insulated later pages to







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#### REFLECTIONS ON ULTIMA BRITISH, FROM RICHARD LORD BRITISH, GARRIOTT HIMSELF

There were many important lessons that came from the experience of creating, faunching, and operation of UO. If I had to plok the most important lesson, it would be understanding that good engineering disciplins works better than the usual game software hacking process. UO started life as a low-budget development project, well off the EA rader, and it was originally cobbled together using early Ultima graphics and hacked together client/server code. The results were very powerful, but far from stable and hardly expendable or maintainable. Ultimately the UC live teams have rewritten pretty much every line of code that was originally included with the game. Good initial ending stardards are essontial to creating an operationally seceptable game which will then let the designers and players grow and evolve the compelling world they wish to live and play in.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ARCADIAN DEL SOL, THE DEVELOPERS AT ORIGIN, RAPH KOSTER, GORDON WALTON, RICHARD GARRIOTT, AND THE PLAYERS WHO HELPED WITH THIS PIECE. TO READ FULL COMMENTS AND INTERVIEWS WITH PLAYERS AND DESIGNERS. GO TO WWW.GAMERS.COM





Five years and many baxes later, UO is primed for its Age of Shadows expansion (which adds paladins and necromancers), and who knows, maybe UO II.



The Elder Scrolls III

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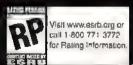
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Xistenze, Choice award
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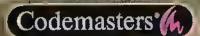


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# WORLD WAR II

SOMER OF WAR

Escape is all in your mind





#### **EverQue**

You can hate it, you can fail to get it, you can want to strangle your loved one for playing it 24/7, but there's no denying EverQuest's status as one of the most important and influential games of the last few years. Although Origin deserves major credit for essentially creating the massively mult player online role playing game genre with Ultima. Online, it was Verant (now Sony Online Entertainment) that scored the genre's first major home run with EverQuest. The game inspired a compulsive addiction so scary that support groups of players' spouses actually began offering help and advice to "EverQuest widows."

EverQuest truly created a feeling of a living, breathing world, thanks in no small part to the large, friendly player community, at the members of which were logging just as many hours in the game. as you were. Once you had spent a certain amount of time in EQ, that world became just as real, and sometimes more important—than the real world. It's he ped that verant has continued working to keep the game fresh, with big expansions and free upgrades that keep players always coming back to see more. EverQuest is still the most popular MMORPG to date and the one to which all new titles are compared. But that may change soon EverQuest II is on the way.

Two multiplayer monsters and the maker of SCUMM join the pantheon.

### Counter-Strike

Hall of Fame entry is generally reserved for people or things who've been retired or are no longer in their nevday. Not so Counter-Strike. From its early days as a rough Half-Life mod, through its official release by Slerra. to today, CS has grown and grown in popularity. It's the most popular mod ever and is still right up there, years after its first release, as one of the biggest online games in terms of sheer numbers on a daily basis. You could log on right now and easily find \$0,000 people playing. That s astronomical.

So what makes CS special? What separates it from every other tactical simulation? For one, it's not a sim. Sure, the weapons are mode ed with realism in mind, and there are no power-ups or health packs lying around. but CS was and is all about fun over real sm. Two teams armed with real world guns going head-to head to plant or defuse a bomb, or rescue or defend some hostages, round after round is the closest thing to playing "guns" when you were a kid. This time instead of yelling. "Bang! I shot you!" and hearing, "Dude, you totally missed," you'll just get people accusing you of hacking. Some things never change.







#### Ron Gilbert

Why are we crediting someone for creating scum? Well, we actually mean SCUMM (Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion), which was the heart of many LucasArts adventure games such as Maniac Mansion, Day of the Tentacle, and The Secret of Monkey Island. The brain behind these games 5 Ron Gilbert, who programmed the SCUMM engine and designed the classic LucasArts games they powered.

Just making SCUMM and the first two Monkey Island games would have been enough to put him in the Hall of Fame. But then he went and created Humongous Entertainment and Cavedog Entertainment, two stellar game companies. Although Humongous was "just" a children's edula nment developer, Gilbert put as much thought, design effort, and numor into Putt-Putt and Pajama Sam as he did into Guybrush Threepwood and Purple Tentacle, At Cavedoo, Gilbert funded and produced Chris Taylor's classic Total Annihilation.

Since leaving Humongous/Cavedog, Gilbert has created another edutainment company, Hulabee Entertainment Although we still hope for the day when his never finished adventure game Good & Evil comes out, for now we'll keep a close eye on whatever comes out of Hulabee, and salute Gilbert for being one of computer gaming's great pioneers.

# THECGWHALLOFFAME

Dani Buntan Berry, time believe John Carmack, frammer Sid Maler, fane Belene Roberta Williams, San Billiam

Alone in the Dark (Helie, 192) The Bard's Tale (6), 1985) Battle Chess (Inlersley, 1988) **Bettleground** series. (falussit, 1995-process) Betrayal at Krender-(Bytamix, 1693) Chessmaster (Sultmere Toolmarks, 1986) Civilization (licrobio, 1996)

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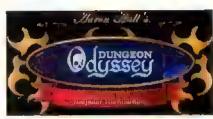


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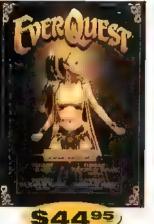


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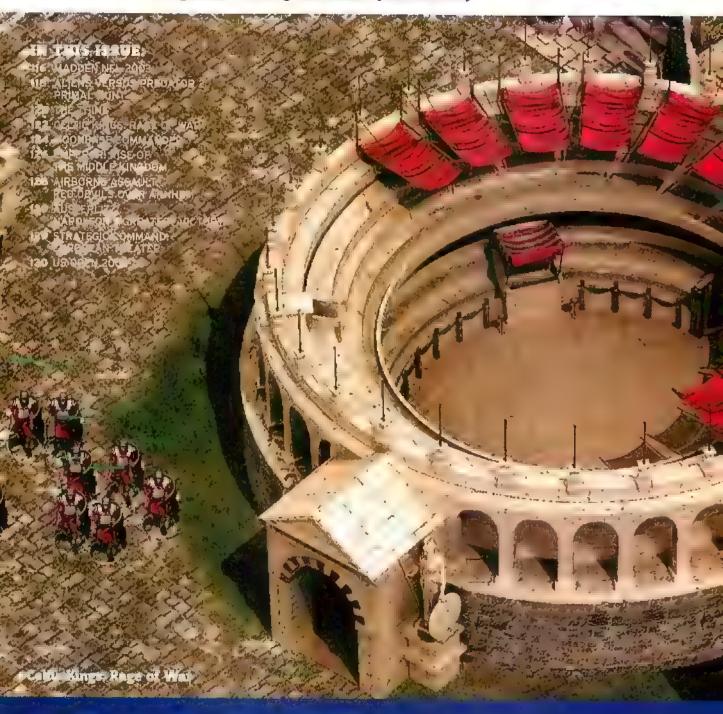






# Reviews

We love games, we hate games Edited by Robert Coffey



How Do We Rate?

We review only finished games no petas, no patches



OUTSTANDING
The rare game
that gets it all
right. A must-play
experience.

VERY GOOD Worthy of your time and mensy, but there are rerewhecks. AVERAGE Eithe an ambitious design with major flams. and WEAK Seriousty facilities in play value, peerly conceived, or just another clone. ARYSMAL The care game that gets it all wreng. Pathetic, Coaster material.



## Madden NFL 2003

Finally on the same field as the console big boys By Rob Smolka



FUNDED EA Sports DIFFIORIT EA Sports ((IRC Sports (III), www.easports.com Ma Will Everyone NUT \$39.95

MORNING Pontlum II 400, 64MB RAM, 75MB hard drive space ULCONSELECTO INLOCITALNENTS. Pentlum III 800, 256MB RAM, 700MB hard drive space, gamepad MUPLIER SUITOR LAN. Internet (2-16 players)



hank God for consoles. No, I haven't turned trailor or lost my mental faculties.

The reason I'm so grateful to the PC's dumbed-down cousins is that without them, we wouldn't have been blessed with such a fantastic football game to play on our beloved system of choice. You see, Maddon NFL 2003 may be the only football game available for the PC, but the ruth ess competition among Sony, Sega, Microsoft, and EA Sports for the precious dollars of PS2, Xbox, and GameCube football lans has resulted in some truly outstanding examples of the genre, and we gamers are the beneficiaries. And unlike previous PC versions of Madden, in which EA Sports took the incredibly lazy route of regurgitating the previous year's console code, glaring warts still attached, we are now on equal footing, with a game that takes advantage of the PC's particular



With every new iteration, the Madden series gets closer to replicating the game of pre feetball on our monitors.

#### It's Good!

And that's putting it mildly. Madden 2003 is one of the most beautiful games I've ever had the pleasure to ogle at onmy monitor. The one major asset the PC can claim over the consoles is the ability to display games in ridiculously high resolutions. Any decent system these days should be able to handle 1024x768, but if you're packing some extra power in your tower, you can crank this baby up



like the '78 Steelers and Cowboys.

to 1600x1200 and glory in the visual magnificence. My Athlon 1800XP and Radeon 8500 combo had no problem cranking out frame rates at this resolution, and even after more than a season's worth of contests, I'm still amazed by how sweet this game looks. The incredibly varied and ultrarealistic animations add to the ocular festivities, and the face mapping of the players is as good as I've seen in any game.



The rest of the package is nearly as superb. The interface has been streamlined and refined, and if you've been keeping up with the series, you'l be impressed with its ease of use. New-comers shouldn't have too many problems, either, but any game with this many options is bound to be a bit confusing at first. One notable improvement comes in the form subtraction. The comatose play calls of Pat Summerall have finally been retired (as has Pat), and the game has improved tenfold because of it, Color commentary still.

no matter how out of shape you happen to be!

#### Training Camp

One of the greatest additions to the game (whose exclusion in the past always riked me to no end) is the accelerated play clock. This simple change makes all the difference in the world when you're playing a game. Now, when you or the opposing team head to the line of scrimmage, the play clock will automatically run down to 15 seconds, with an appropriate amount of time being taken off the game clock. What this does is: a) result in the correct number of plays in a 60-minute

game, b) force you to make quick decisions before the snap as far as reading the defense or calling an audible, and c) make the two-minute drill meaninoful.

The play modes are phenomenal, too. The 30-year dynasty mode is masterfully executed and quite challenging, even for the sharpest of wannabe coaches and GMs. The online play is smoothly implemented and fully supported by EA Sports, with tournaments and online rankings so you can claim bragging. rights. Perhaps the best-and most useful-mode of play is the minicamp. In this segment, you travel around the country and learn how to master the game and its plethora of control options Your rewards, other than a set of enviable skills with the gamepad, are that you can then unlock relevant game situations based on the skul you've just mastered, and you can open up other camps that teach you even more advanced techniques. This is not only a great idea, but also one of the most funparts of a game loaded with great experiences

Madden NFL 2003 is one of the most thorough and impressive games i have seen in any genre. If you even think you might like to try a football game, I urge you to run out and get a copy. If you're the type that habitually buys Madden every year, you're in for a real treat.

# VERDICT This is what happens when EA actually tries: a football classic.

# After more than a season's worth of contests, I'm still amazed by how sweet this game looks.

isn't that great: Al Michaels has some difficulties with enthusiasm and voice inflection and Madden can get extremely repetitious. But compared to what we had before, it's like angels singing.

None of the features would mean a thing if the game stumpled on the field. but the gameplay is the strongest part of the package. Nearly every problem that I've had with the Madden series over the years has been addressed. Sure, there will diways be room for improvement in certain areas (clock management, play calling, individual players' Al), but we've finally reached the point where the adjustments that need to be made are at the fine tuning level, not the "boy this sucks-they really need to rethink it" level. All of the players on the field take actions that are at least appropriate and are occasionally brilliant. And the coaches of the computer teams actually have a clue about what to do when the end of the half or the game is approaching.





# Aliens Versus Predator 2: Primal Hunt

A weak expansion pack to a great game By Jason Babler

PUBLISHE Sterra Entertainment DISTORE Third Law that First-person avp2.slerra.com 1935 Mature: blood and gore, strang language, violence MKI 519.99

Himidalida Allens Versus Predator 2 BitMBRR Massikinii Nane WITHTHE SHEET Internet. LAN (2-16 players)

hen AVP2 came out last year, it burst through CGW and subsequently took home the awards for Best Action Game Best Mult player Game, and Best Gaming Moment, Primal Hunt is going to take the Best Blueballs award for not delivering on what could have been a preat expansion.

As with most expansions, there is a list of exciting features on the box: nine new single-player missions (three per species), four new multiplayer levels, a few new weapons, and two new creatures to fight. But it's not as fun as it sounds

The weapons are a real letdown. As a corporate Human, you get a deployable remote sentry gun (true to the restored scenes from the Aliens: Special Edition DVD), but you get the gun only at the end of the Human level, even then, it's useless in the boss fight, You also get a turret gun, dual pistois, and an upgraded motion tracker, none of which are very impressive.

The Ancient Predator race is virtually



# The Ancient Predator race is virtually indistinguishable from the regular Predator race in the original game.

indistinguishable from the Predator race in the original game. You get an energy flechette that sucks and the ability to self-destruct in multiplayer Basically. there's nothing to write home about. You do get to play as the PregAlien, but the g mmick is superficial, you get the Predator's mandibles, which show up when you give head-bites, and being a lace-hugger or chestburster allows you to break through vents,

Early into playing this expansion pack I thought that the Aliens perhaps had improved Al. One gripe I had about the first game was that a horde of attacking Aliens tended to come at you in a straight line. But a thorough playing of the expansion showed that the Aliens have gotten even dumber. And the gameplay is a big disappointment. When I wasn't grate over the clipping and bounding problems, I was annoyed at being pulled out of the game experience by seeing Aliens suddenly spawning

It seems like Sierra really rushed this to market. Some of the boss fights were incredibly hard, while others were over before my adrenaine even got pumping.

There's little difference between the character classes, and the two new creatures you fight are incredibly lame-



but all this wouldn't be so horrible if the level design made up for it. It doesn't. In fact, Primal Hunt took a noticeable chunk of its revels right out of the original game. What's fun about running around the same levels that are in the regular game? It makes you wonder what you're getting for your 20 bucks.

One thing I do have to give this game a thumbs-up for is its story. It's an interesting tale that puts all the races into a fight for an ancient artifact that can control, or at least hold at bay, the Aliens. The story, to d from the perspective of the three races, spans a

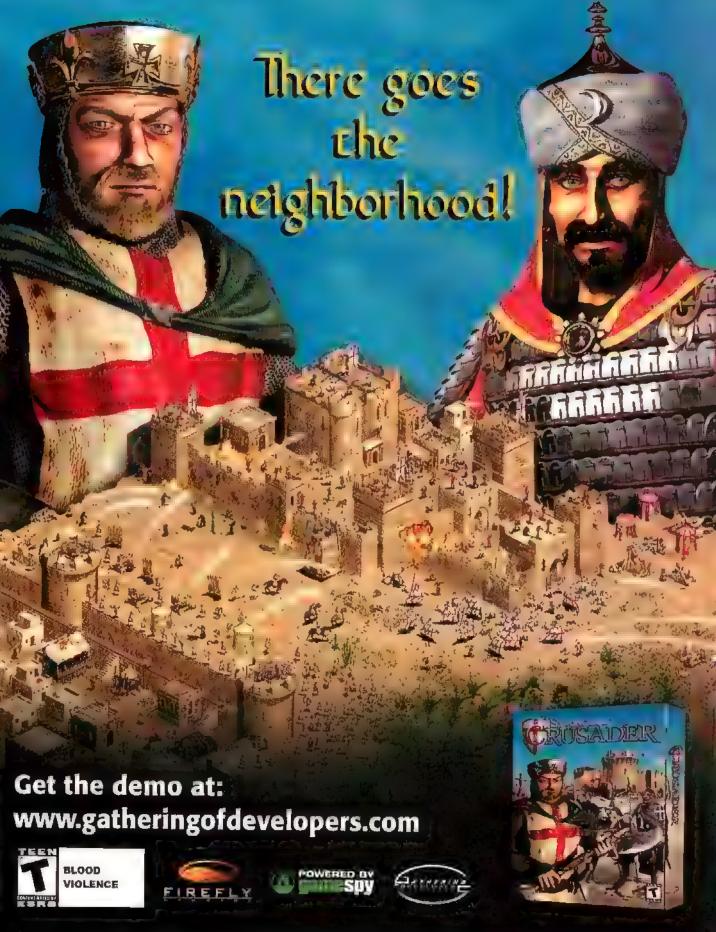


Hug a Predator when he's eround his buddles and they'll put him-and youout of misery.

time period from 500 years in the past to the time frame in AVP2. Expect to see familiar Human characters from the original game. The expansion pack also resolves some lingering questions from the original game, but sadly Primal Hunt's ending doesn't answer all the questions the game raises, leaving an opening for yet another expansion pack, Great.

VERDICT \*\*

You're not getting much, even for an expansion pack.



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# The Thing

Put it back in the ice-it's thawed out too early! By Thierry Nguyen

**Fullishit Universal Studios** Interactive NILIFIE Computer Artworks SHE Action un www.thethinggame.com ESES MAINS Mature; blood and nore, w glence MIC 549.99

MODERNING Pentium († 400, 64MB RAM, 600MB hard drive space ACCOMUNDED CLOURENEHTS Pentium m app NUMBER OF BOTH

ost game adaptations of movies are doomed to fail. What works as a passive experience on a big screen doesn't translate well into an interactive experience on a small screen. For every instance of a Goldeneye or Allens Versus Predator 2, there are more abominations like Die Hard: Nakatomi Piaza and E.T. Right between these camps is The Thing Positioning itself as a sequel of sorts (taxing place two months after John Carpenter's 1982 movie), The Thing almost succeeds as a game but gets stopped short by some glaring mistakes.

#### **Evolution of Fear**

Computer Artworks' previous game, Evolva, was a solid effort at third person action with squad management. The Thing evolves that style by adding the elements of trust and fear. Like the movie, the game is wrought with paranola about who's infected with

the Thing. You need to earn the trust of your squadmates (who are engineers, medics, and sold ers) by giving them weapons, performing a blood test on yourself, or killing mandestations of the Thing. Otherwise, your squadmates won't listen to you. You can always try to coerce them into following an order (point a gun to their head), but that significantly notches down their trust in you.

Because the Thing tends to manifest as a blood-spewing mishmash of body parts, It can spook even the most hardened soldiers. Whenever your squadmates encounter the Thing or walk into a room where it's splitting bodies open hither and thither, they'll start to freak out. At their most scared, they won't listen to orders, they'll start pissing their pants or vomiting, or they'll just blow their own heads off with guns. You can alleviate the soldlers' fear by giving them weapons, killing the nasty Thing beasts,

or administering adrenatine shots.

On top of managing your buddles and their scarediness, you alp around the lamous Antarctica base (some locations are straight from the movie, others are new), opening doors, killing Things, and figuring out what's going on, Some puzzles are straightforward-for example, a door needs fixing, so you need to find an engineer to repair it. Others are a bit more involved what do you do when you find yourself trapped and weaponless (this tired action game cliché) with a big Thing roaming the hall next to you or when you encounter a trapped medic, an engineer who doesn't trust you, or a locked armory? Puzzle tasks may include using video cameras, reading computer logs, and using devices like furnaces and power generators on gibbering, gross Things.

#### I Can't See You

Unfortunately. The Thing is one of those



Anyone can be the Thing: seme are scripted to be the Thing but some just fall victim to a gitch and become a Thing, even after being marked as infection free.









# Certain people must be scripted to become Things no matter what, to support the premise that "even your team members can become goretastic tentacled manbeasts."

games that has a great concept but is filled with crippling annoyances that drag down the entire experience. For example, you can't look up or down in third person, and you can't move in first person-forgivable in Metal Gear Solid, which was focused on stealth and careful aim, but not for a game in which you're surrounded by severed heads sprouting legs. After games like GTA III and even old school Tomb Raider allowed free-looking in third-person perspective, the lack of a Z-axis leets particularly limiting.

Because this is a console port, it uses a save point system that requires you to find data recorders scattered around the levels. I didn't mind the lack of saveanywhere, but the placement of the save-points could use some work: It was frustrating to fight the first big boss and then not find another recorder until

significantly further into the next mission. To top it off, whenever you die, you get the option to either restart the level or go to the main menu Couldn't someone slap on a Load Game button instead of making me go back to the menu to load?

The Thing virus itself is inconsistent in the gameplay. I understand that early on certain people must be scripted to become Things no matter what, in order to support the premise that "even your team members can become goretastic tentacted manbeasts." But still, late in the game, I could perform a blood test, get a "he's human!" result, and a minute later see my buddy become another blood-spewing flesh pile. Also, teammates would disappear inexplicably, three characters enter an elevator with me, the door closes, the next level loads, and—poof—now there are only two.

The Thing is a competent survival horror game, with hooks that could have made it better and programming errors that bring it down. I did, in the end, enjoy playing the game despite its annoyances. If you can stomach the multitude of little errors, the game is a fun horror ride, and it serves as a plausible follow-up to the events in the movie. Survival horror fans who don't mind the glitches and console carryovers will probably enjoy this game for everyone else, The Thing will feel like a game that got thawed out a little too early.

## VERDICT AAAAAA

This is a great game concept that's perfectly in tune with the movie, but you'll get bogged down by glitches; and annoyances,



# Celtic Kings: Rage of War

The stuff of legends By Raphael Liberatore



Number Strategy First NYLOHR Haumiment Games MAR Realtime strategy JII. www.stratecovitrst .com (SH Billist Mature) blood and gore. violence BXI \$39,99

southblitt Panthum II 400, 64MB RAM, BOOMB hard drive space ticonvitces teoritatut None Putlikuitti SOPPRE Internet, LAN (2-8 players)

ar dominated ancient Gau. a place where Celts, Teutons, and other Gallic tribes constantly battled in the age-old struggle for more land. Welcome to Celtic Kings, where only the bravest and most heroic warriors, counseled by the mysterious druids, can carve out a piece of ancient Gaul through hard combat and successful resource management

Celtic Kings offers gamers two webdesigned single-player games, Both versions provide an RPG element similar to Warlords Battlecry II and WarCraft III, in which levels are gained through combat, quest completion, and the acquisition of magical items. The more levels your heroes gain, the more effectively they and the troops under them will light when in battle

The adventure game is a linely scripted story filled with historicaintrique and battle. As in the movie Braveheart, the hero in Celtic Kings is



and artifacts. Your here will come acress many sanctuaries like this one, where druids can perform a number of useful incantations to beister your hero's heroics.

## You can configure computer opponents for defensive, chaotic, or aggressive playing styles.

out to destroy invaders who are helfpent on oppressing his people. Backed by the Ceitic goddess Cathobodua and following the will of the druids, your hero, Larax, pursues the Teutons through vast kingdoms, ancient ruins, and druid shrines. As he beats back the Teulon invaders across a huge map, Larax Joins forces with an eclectic cast of characters that includes spellcasting druids, Vixing heroes, and cunning village chiefs, in the end, the alliances

formed from mission to mission unite Gaul in victory.

Whereas the adventure game is scripted. you can play the single-player game against up to seven computer opponents in a variety of settings, configurations, and victory conditions. Owing to the game's depth, you can configure computer opponents for defensive, chaotic, or aggressive styles of play with varying degrees of difficulty. Additionally, you can select an island map and provide your opponents with various artifacts for added fighting prowess. You can choose to play either fierce Gauls or efficient Romans, each with unique unit types and buildings that define your strategy.

Half, Maximust Heroes are the most vital unit in Celtic Kings, and the arena is the place to hire them to lead your

Celtic Kings is different from other resource strategy games because it eliminates the need to build structures. The single-player game starts with one stronghold containing a village hall, blacksmith shop, arena, barracks, tavern, and druid house. Food is essential for feeding troops and geasant workers, and gold is required to strengthen your army with unit upgrades from a simple tech tree. Food is produced in villages, while gold is generated in strongholds and outposts. Establishing trade routes to neighboring villages in order to gain. more resources may dictate additional strategy. Such trade routes can also help you balance the population density of your villages, as overpopulation can lead to starvation.

Haemimont Games did a decent job with graphics resolution; the details are better than those in most other RTS games I've seen. The map editor is a bonus, a lowing you to create your own missions and maps.

Celtic Kings is a deft blend of combat. resource management, and role playing against the backdrop of ancient Gaul. So, paint yourself up like a Certic warrior, grab your sword, and Join the fray.

A fine blend of strategy, combat, and role playing, Celtic Kings is a game even legendary Gallic hero Finn Mac Cool would find a worthy challenge.



The village half is your central holding area, where you gather resources and feed and quarter your troops. The capture of an enemy village half gains you centrol of that village.

By The Developers of the Award-Winning Imperium Galactica and Imperium Galactica II

# HEGEMONIA-LEGIONS OF DIRON



IN 2104, MANKIND IS ENGAGED IN A FRATRICIDAL WAR BETWEEN EARTH AND MARS POPULATIONS. AFTER WEEKS OF FIERCE SPACE BATTLES AND HEAVY LOSSES, BOTH SIDES HAVE TO JOIN TOGETHER AND FORM THE LEGIONS OF IRON TO FIGHT A NEW ALIEN ENEMY FORCE.

"...promises to breath new life into the deathly quiet genre of sci-fi 3D RTS gaming...one of the best looking games on the E3 showroom floor. "- GAMESPY

\*...the game simply looks gorgeous and also plays

very well to boot." \* HOMELAN

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## MoonBase Commander

Matinee sci-fl warfare for the kiddies By John Fletcher

Interactive
(Interactive
(INTERACTIVE ALIMENTALIS
(INTERACTIVE ALIMENTA

RICHEVER PERILL TO 1233, 32MB RAM, 400MB herd drive space Provided Money Control Service LAN, TCP/IP (2-4 players)

oonBase Commander is a kids' game. Adults inight find it simplistic, repetitious, and boring, but it's possible that younger kids might find it accessible, challenging, and addictive.

MC is an attempt to bring children into the strategy game genre. Essentially It's an arcade game with some light RTS elements-teach the kids how to allocate resource points while never ready making them think, Each mission starts the player with a single hub pod and orders to either destroy the enemy or beat them to a geographic location. All the factions in the game have the same units, which differ only slightly in appearance and color. Your movement options are to launch either buildings to expand your reach or bombs to destroy enemy units. Each unit on the menu of launch options costs 1, 3, or 7 points, which are deducted from a total generated at the beginning of every round

As in any arcade game, the levels get progressively harder with the addition of challenges like wind speed, multiple enemies, and time limits. The game plays very smoothly, and for a few minutes it's mildly amusing to gauge your launches against the wind and terrain. But turn off the voice-over immediately, as the voice talent in MC is unrelentingly irritating

Simplicity permeates every aspect of MounBase Commander. It takes about five minutes to figure out, and everything from the scenario objectives to the map ed for are as basic as they come. This is not necessarily a bad thing—an MC mission can make a nice cool down from an evening of more intense gaming. On the other hand, with no bells or whistles of any sort, the game is exceedingly bland. More than once I had to remind myself that I was getting paid to play It. Without that Incentive, MC would be seeing about as much action on my computer as Minesweeper.

MC is one of those quiet little games that won't sell much and seems to serve mainly as a résumé builder for the project's participants. It's soil d'but unremarkable and will soon be one of those titles in the \$7.99 bargain bins. Still, it does what it does well and is a good choice for parents who don't mind if Junior indulges in some cartoon-style explos ons that at least don't expose him to the immorality of games that reward carjackings and thrill kills.

#### VERDICT \*\*

There's nothing terribly wrong or right with MoonBase Commander, but odds are the kids it's targeting are aiready playing better games.

### **GAME PATCHES**

## Revisionist History

Soldier of Fortune iii

m comforted by the fact that Raven put only 16 "dismemberment zones" in Soldier of Fortune 11, because, as we all know, 17 dismemberment zones would have been just sick. SOF II is sadistic in the purest sense: a mixture of casual crucity and unrelenting repetition, much like the writing of the Marquis de Sade, its only Saving grace is a multiplayer mode that would kick much more ass It had more than three decent maps. (Those are, however seems mighty fine CTF maps.) Version 1.01 slightly ameliorates



that situation by adding lour new multiplayer maps, though these are also of variable quality. Multiplayer seems to have gotten the most attention in 1.01 with the addition of a new Demofition mode and a weapon called the MP55D. The MP5 is a îremarkably useless weapon, and its inclusion adds nothing to the game but an incredibly irritating sound effect akin to BBs falling on tin roof-in stereo! The Raven team tended to a variety of multiplayer problems-among them exploit holes, buffer overruns; licaning bug, and verious server management problems-making for smoother online experience. They also cleaned up single-play mode a bit, so various mission errore including spontaneous death and a level that never ends are now fixed. The incredibly irritating NPCs Who Gan Sea Through Tall Grass have had their X-ray vision removed, and stun grenades now have more of an effect on NPCs, Overall, the 1.01 patch offers some very-needed **Improvements** 







# **Emperor: Rise of the Middle Kingdom**

Eastward, ho! By Tom Chick

**DOTOTEL Impressions** Softwore (INII Strategy **W. www.sterra.com** ISB DING Everyone HKL 539.99

Monthlitti Pentium II 400, 64MB RAM, 900MB hard drive space ACCOMMENCAD REQUIREMENTS Pantium III 800. 128MB RAM BUDDINATE SUPPORT LAN, Internet, direct connect (2-9 players)

fter casting about for other ancient civilizations, Impressions has taken its city-building series to China, where it achieves a delicate balance of the fam har and the exotic. The lamiliar is the same old game system they've been honing since Caesar started it all 10 years ago: lay out your roads, set up your industries, and watch it all bustie. The exotic is the new setting, with colorful architecture, clattering rickshaws, Buddha statues, cherry blossom trees. and the occasional shrill strain of Asian pipe music.

One of the enduring problems in this series has been getting those friggin' walkers (who deliver the goods your city needs) to go where they're needed. Emperor finally solves the problem by letting you build walls to divide your city into discrete districts. You have control at every gate over who can pass, which makes it much easier to control who's

walking where. This means your safety inspectors won't be wandering around on the south side while the northern half of your city burns to the ground. Also new is the ability to plant different crops at each farm, a flexible irrigation system, and three distinct climates. These factors give Emperor a nifty Sim-larm vibe. Because Emperor covers a longer period of history than did the previous games, you'll find a lot more variety among the industries and commerce types as you play in different eras of Chinese history.

The combat system is still coarse and chaotic, driven by a dumb and easy-tobeat Al. Naval combat has been removed in favor of more types of land units, including siege engines for attacking city defenses. The new religious system is a

step backward from the previous games, mainly offering the micromanagerial hassle of appeasing a bunch of Whiny heraes with periodic gifts The con voluted Chinese zodiac element doesn't add much to the game. There's also an obscure fend shur scheme by which certain

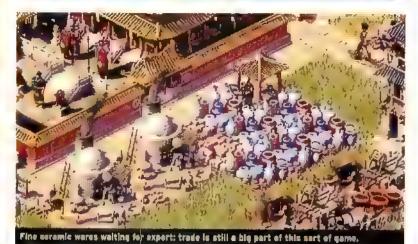
The core of the game is as satisfying as it ever was.



Much of the satisfaction in the game is to be foundin starting and completing big projects like the Grand Canal.



The Chinese New Year calebration here is indicative of the inspired art and animation direction that bring lots of life and color to the game.



buildings in certain places make for a more harmon ous, and therefore healthy, city, Good tuck figuring out now this ancient Chinese secret is supposed to work.

Although the Chinese setting is largely a skin job, it's an effective one. The developers at Breakaway did a superb job overhauling the artwork and animation. For instance, you'd expect fishermen to be guys in coolie hats. sitting in boats, Instead, you see an animation of fishermen using tethered birds of prey to catch their fish. You get New Year's parades, elaborate pagodas, tigers and pandas in bamboo forests. and exotic rock formations. You're trading bags of rice, spools of silk, and pronze, ceramic, and racquer vessels. Herbalists and acupuncturists roam the streets making house calls. A man in a silk robe carries a banner announcing performing acrobats in the marketplace

Underneath this veneer, the core of the game is as satisfying as it ever was. You can choose from among several campaigns that take you through relatively short and focused scenarios as well as epic multihour sessions, all driven by specific goals. There are also

### MAKING MULTIPLAYER WORK

multiplayer city-building game? How goes that work? Anyone who tried SimCity 2000 Network Edition knows how it doesn't work: everyone trying to build the same city, hashing out the details of garbage collection and policy coverage. SimCityCouncilMeeting. Emperor takes a different approach, giving each player a city with which to receive concernplish the scenario goals. In cooperative scenaries, cities feam up to win. The goals tend to keep playing time to less than two hours, although you can save longer games and resume them later. Cities are connected on an empire map that allows esplonage, conquest, one trans.

Unfortunately, esplonage and conquest don't work very well in multiplayer games. Splan have any minor effects and the Ai is completely ineffective at using your armies when you attack. But trading activities in multiplayer games breathe newlife into the sense; in the Eight Ringdoms multiplayer scenario, for instance, each city has something every other city wants. Some scenaries have menagerie victory conditions, which means you'll have to stock your balace zoo by exchanging local animals with other cities, "I have a ponda bear from Changdu, a pheasant from Jianking, and algrocodile from Quangxhou if I can just get a wild pig from Luoyang, I'll be all set!" When you have to deal with human players for this, the museuss of personal interaction said an intriguing new angle to city building

open-ended games, a random map generator, and new multiplayer support (see sidebar). But no matter how you play them, Impressions' city-building games are like houses of cards. When they work, you get a grand, delicate, elaborate structure. When they collapse, it's a spectacular failure. Alono the way you're treated to the aesthetic appeal of seeing the city you designed swarm with

activity. Emperor offers up the delight of RollerCoaster Tycoon with a historical bent and a sharp, colorful Asian edge.

#### VERDICT

Without the problems that took away from earlier impressions city builders, Emperor delivers solid, familiar gameplay in an exotic setting.



## Airborne Assault: Red Devils Over Arnhem

I was only following orders By Bruce Geryk

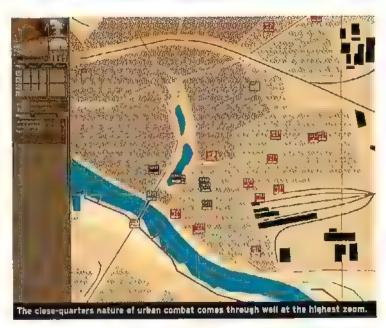
ECONTININ'S Celeron 366, 64MB RAM, 200MB hard drive space tttpmancia reconstitution Celeron 500, 128MB RAM, 600MB hard drive space ML MANIA 1990M Internet, LAN (2 players)



nnovation in operational wargaming has been a long time coming. While the idea

of reso ving simultaneous, real-time orders on a hex free battlef eld made its appearance in Chris Crawford's Patton Versus Rommel 16 years ago, newcomer Parther Games takes it much further in Airborne Assault. This sound concept shows off the strengths of the PC as a wargame platform while also exposing its weaknesses.

Airborne Assault is a company-level simulation of the 1944 Market Garden operation to seize the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem. It doesn't simulate all of Market Garden, focusing only on the British list Parachute Division and its heroic battle (immortalized in the film A Bridge Too Far), and thus mostly leaves out the American airborne forces and the land-based thrust to link up with the bridgehead. It's a good design decision, while the epic feel of this massive operation is lost, the narrowed scope



# The game's genius is that it forces you to focus on the command structure as a basis for strategy in a way no wargame has done so far.

keeps the player from being buried in command decisions, which is what this game is all about.

The game's genlus is that it forces you to focus on the command structure as a basis for strategy in a way no wargame has done so fac in a move worthy of the Prussians, the designers have made it

ARNHEN

Command structures are clearly marked and easy to navigate.

possible to scroll through an entire command structure simply with the arrow keys. Want to know which unit directly commands the one you have selected? Hit the Up key. This ab lify is important, because giving orders to formations, not individual units, is often the key to success.

The game plays out in real time, although the pacing suffers somewhat from the need to constantly hit the Pause button in order to examine the battlefield. This is where the focus on the Arnhem bridge really proves valuable; if you were constantly forced to scroll up and down Hell's Highway to adjust your orders, the tedium level would skyrocket. With most of the action north of the Rhine, the battlefield is manageable.

Good At in Airborne Assault manifests itself not only in good countermoves by the enemy, but in intelligent maneuvers by your own forces in response to the disposition of their headquarters. Ordering a battalion to attack and then defend a certain area results in a comprehensive reorientation of your units, with artiflery redeploying to the least-threatened area of your perimeter and other units coordinating appropriately. It's



Some of the zoom-out views are of limited use.

truly transparent command. You can always give specific orders to every individual unit, but that is often not the nest way to play.

Airborne Assault isn't a command simulator, because at any time you can click on any unit you want and give it orders, and the only delay is the time it takes the unit to reorganize and implement those orders. You can always see all of your units as well. At the real Arnhem bridge, the overall commander often had little idea of what was happening. That wouldn't make for a very interesting game, though.

Airborne Assault plays very differently from most computer wargames, but for the most part, its design comes up aces.

VERDICT \*\*\*

A polished, conceptually sound approach to wargaming that still has a few problems to solve.

# Austerlitz: Napoleon's Greatest Victory

Probably more fun than old Nappy had himself By Bruce Geryk

fullifiel Shrapnel Games BR.NR Breskeway Games (80) Registime Warqame lift www.shcopnelgames.com (9) MING Not rated PEL \$44.95 plex shlopina

STREETS PRACTICALLY 266, 64MB RAM, 200MB hard drive space ELCONNERGED EL CHIEFMENTS Pentium III 800. 256MB RAM Williams Supply Internet. LAN (2-8 players)



Sid Meler's Gettysburg engine, and after a bit of a false start at applying the system to the Napoleonic era, Breakaway has finally hit on the right

A real-time wargame that covers huge battles like Waterloo and Austerlitz necessarily involves lots of



wars. It makes for a much more interest-



troops. Whereas the game of Waterloo left you with nothing but an overused Pause button, Ausferlitz lets you turn units over to Al control; now white you're busy commanding a crucial Hanking maneuver, you don't have to worry that your covering force is just twiddling its thumbs. The Al is certainly no Napo eon (or even Davout), but it's a welcome feature. And the game is now finally stable in multiplayer with more than one player per side, allowing you to light as many as four against four Cooperative Austerlitz is one of the best pure wargaming experiences that can be had.

After you've worked out the command and control scheme, you'll see

how well the Gettysburg engine adapts lo Napoleonic warfare, in fact, it's arquably better suited to this than to the American Civil War, as the various unit formations that characterize Napoleonic warfare (square, line, road to umn, maneuver column, double line) add a lot of strategic depth, as does the focus on cavalry, With the new Aland multiplayer features, Austerlitz finally does justice to what was a revolutionary game system. Sid Meier should be proud

VERDICT TO THE PARTY OF THE PAR This sequel to Waterios learned from that game's mistakes.



# Strategic Command: European Theater

Around the war in a day By Bruce Geryk

Ramer Battlefront.com CHILDRET Fury Software CIMI Strategic-level wazgamę all www.battlefront.com FIRESHING Not rated **90.552 0**37

HOSEINENS Pent Jm 166. J2MB RAM, SOMB hard drive space ECCOMMENCED RECREMENTS. Pentium II NOOTSTATER SUPPORT Hotsest. PBEM (2 players)

ing hattlefleld.

anzers in Russia, wolfpacks in the Atlantic, and massive bomber fleets do capture

the magination, allowing games with simple mechanics, like Strategic Command, to be interesting as long as they are clever about how they make these elements stand out. Here, they're not well integrated into the design and thus have little effect on gameplay.

P ay is stereotyped from game to game. For instance, you'll never have a reason to build subs to strangle Britain economically: they aren't cost effective and are sunk too easily. Some of the research options are interesting, but the need to maintain a large army means you'd likely have to concentrate on the same support technologies each time.

Your tactical choices are equally limited, Although you can invade Spain to take

Gibraltar and get the Italian freet into the Atlantic to support an invasion of England, it makes no sense. If you insist on it anyway, the Soviets will hand you your ass. The game appears balanced against the Axis to make it chakenging against the poor Al, so playing as the Allies is out of the question, as is multiplayer with a competent Allied opponent.

Fortunately, the game comes with a powerful and easy-to-use campaign editor, so you can fix some of the flaws in the standard game or just create your own scenarios. You can't change any of the basic game mechanics, though, so you're stuck with the problematic strategic warfare model unwieldy naval combat, and we'rd economics. It's an addictive little game for a white, but after you've beaten it a few times, you won't oo back.



matter how you play.

VERDICT TO LOCAL Strategic Command: European Theater is fun for a little while, but that's it.



# **US Open 2002**

Game, set, and match By Tom Price



MANUEL Strategy First MILORIX Carapace Mall Sourts off www.strategyilrst.com AMERICA Everyone HCI \$29.99

ROBRESENS Pentium 10 400, 64MB RAM. 200MB hard drive sonce RECONSENCED FLOUREMENTS None ROCKIPLANER SUPPORT LAN (2-4 players)

don't want to bemoan the fact that there are few good sports titles for gamers of the PC persuasion. Sure, there's not a lot of competition, but the games we do have for each major sport are pretty damn good, Madden, High Heat, FIFA, Links-these are excellent games that we're lucky to have. But untit now, we didn't have a really good tennis game. Yeah I know, I've been crying myself to sleep at night, too.

But seriously, even if you're not the biggest tennis fan in the world, if you think clay is something you played with in arts and crafts class, if you think Venus Williams is some hip-hop diva, if you think...well, you get what I'm saying What I'm saying is that US Open 2002 is a fantastic game that blends arcadelike. reflex-heavy action with genuine sports fundamentals that should please just about any gamer

Before I teli you what's so great about US Open 2002, let me start with what's



ball out of bounds or faults on the net Ever, Diat up the difficulty however, and you get a reasonable semblance of playing against a real live person.

That said, everything else about US Open is pretty much perfect. The game looks fantastic, especially with anti-

# The training modes cover almost every aspect of your game and reward you for hitting specific spets on the court.

### Even more than Anna Kournikova, US Open 2002 makes me more interested in tennis.

not so great. First, although it's a licensed USTA product, there aren't enough wellknown players in the game. No Williams sisters, no Anna Kourn kova, no Sampras. no Agassi-OK, maybe some of my tennis references are a Rittle out of date, but Time Henman just doesn't excite me all that much. The other fault I find is with the Alin the easy mode. It's just plain dumb, letting you set it up for the same exact kill shot every time. Plus, the Alinever hits a

aliasing turned on. Ball physics are well modeled and are affected by the different court surfaces. Control seemed sluggish at first, but then I realized that the game was actually taking the time to model real footwork instead of just left no players turn on a dime and run full speed in any direction (ahem Madden?). The no ses of the crowd are played dynamically, so that you get polite applause for early scores and

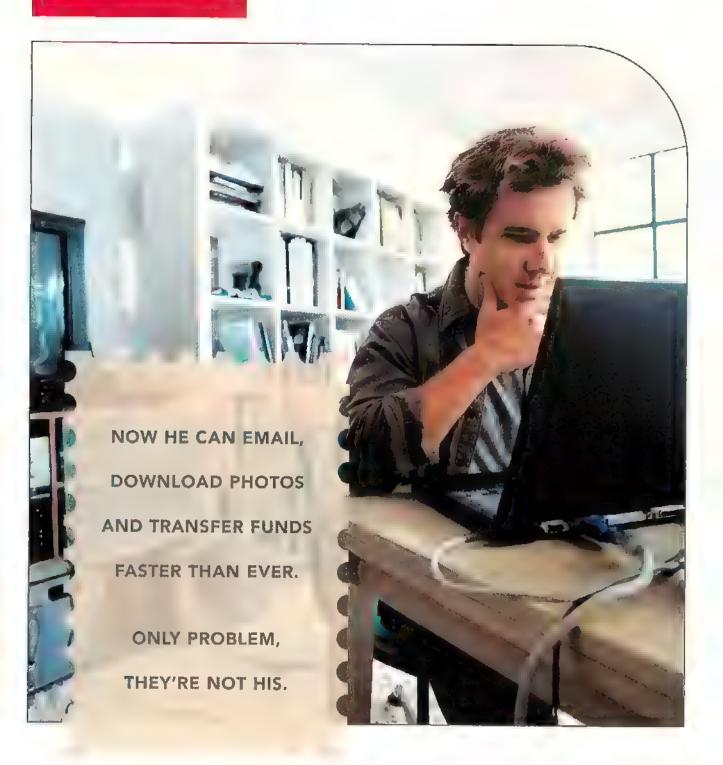
ophs and ahus for dramatic shots or match points.

Game modes include a pretty standard career mode that takes you through four tournaments: the U.S. Open, of course, as well as facsimiles of the French and Australian Opens and Wimbledon (all, except for the U.S. Open, referred to as Classics). Each tournament is divided into separate singles, doubles, and mixed doubles play for added gameplay. In career mode, there is an extensive set of training modules that let you practice your serves, volleys, and smashes. In addition to career mode, there are asso arcade, challenge, and other modes. All of these are well done and give players plenty of time to brush up their game before embarking on a career

I'm really not the world's biggest tennis fan, but this game has succeeded in the one test that any sports game should have to pass. Even more than Anna Kourn kova, US Open 2002 makes me more interested in tennis



VERDICT A A A A Hard to find fault with this fine. tennis sim.



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the #1 anti-virus program for detection and removal, it includes a built-in firewall to keep mischlief-minded code-crackers out of your computer And your life.







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ome people drive Hondas, and some people drive Ferraris, That's the shortest way I know to put this. Some people just drive from point A to point B, and they don't need 400 horses, twin turbochargers, and rock-hard suspension to get there. But there are always those who demand performance. Not just a barn-burner masquerading as a sedan, but a highperformance beast that looks like it was dipped in candy-apple-red lacquer and coated with 20 layers of polyurethane, a streaking fireball that leaves the cops wondering what they saw, If computers were cars, this system would be that beast.

If you want performance, you have to be willing to pay through the nose for it. For the price of the Voodoo Egad E710 (\$5,293), you could get two pretty stout systems. But you wouldn't get the premium components that the Egad boasts. a 2.8GHz Pent um 4 processor, IGB of Kingston PC-1066 RDRAM, two 80GB Western Digital hard drives in a 160GB Promise RAID array, a Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer sound card, and the Plextor DVD ROM/CD-RW combo drive The kicker is that this Voodoo machine features ATI's new 128MB Radeon 9700. The much-ballyhooed graphics processor is the hottest thing on the market right now, with performance that trounces that of the former king, the Generic 4 4600.

As a natural skeptic, I went looking for reasons to ding this machine. But you can't knock its looks: the guys at Voodoo know how to make machines that, in addition to being superfast, are dripping with sex appeal. The customcar-like paint job ensures that you'll be the envy of any LAN party you bring it to. Hell, a geek could even get a date with a box like this. And, as you'll see shortly, you can't knock it on performance, either.

Yes, aside from its hefty price tag (\$3,499 for the CPU alone), this machine is perfect.

#### Not just a Pretty Face

The Egad may have come with a load of hardware that means bus ness, but never mind that for a moment: the falents of the Radeon 9700 cannot be overstated. My initial tests comparing this card to VisionTek's 128M8 GeForce4 Ti 4600 on a similarly configured system had it beating the VisionTek by nearly 25 percent in 3DGameGauge 3.0 at 1024x768x32 with 4x full-screen ontialising enabled. (Watch this space for a full comparison next month.)

I tested the Egad using Extremetech.com's 3DGameGauge 3.0, Quake III Arena, and 3DMark2001 SE Pro. 3DGameGauge 3.0 compiles frame rates from a plethora of games, including Comanche 4. Serious Sam: The Second Encounter, Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast, Dungeon Slege, IL-2 Sturmovik, NASCAR 2002, NHL 2002, and Unreal Tournament 2003. Most impressive was the Egad's 3DMark2001 SE Pro performance At 1024x768x32 with FSAA turned off, It scored an incredible 15816. Not satisfied, I turned on 4x FSAA and, at the same reso ution, the Egad scored 11449. Having failed to make this machine break a sweat. I cranked the resolution to 1600x1200x32 and still had FSAA turned on. Amazingly, the machine still scored 6494.

These are the kind of 3DMark2001 SE Pro numbers that the original GeForce3 cards were getting at 1024x768x32 with FSAA turned off! In other words, with a machine of this caliber, it's possible to play games at superhigh resolutions with 4x FSAA turned on and the textures cranked all the way up

Tests with individual games, too,



With a kick-ass list of peripherals and a stellar design, this is a solid beast that will keep you gaming happily for quite some time.

showed that this machine is a brute. The antiquated Quake III: Arena smoked at 1600x1200x32 with all the textures and 4x FSAA turned on, reaching frame rates of 91 fps. In other tests, including Serious Sam: TSE and Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast, the Egad didn't show dramatic performance improvements over the comparison machine running a GeForce4 T1 4600 card at 1024x768x32 with FSAA turned off. But when a turned FSAA on and cranked up the resolutions, the Egad still flew and the performance of the GeForce4 Ti 4600-based machine fell off.

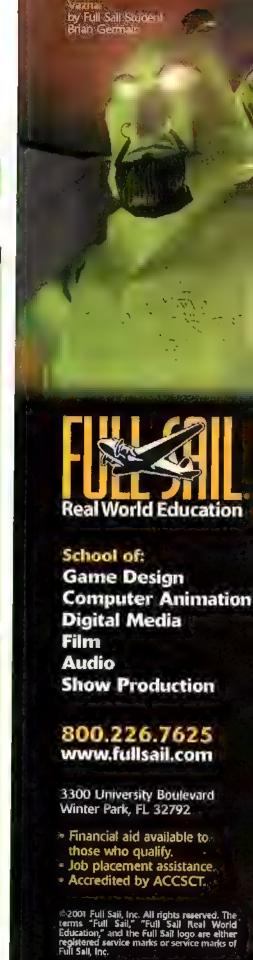
Voodoo's Egad is one of the most incredible machines that I've tested, With a kick-ass set of peripherals and a stellar design, this machine will keep you happily gaming for quite some time.

VERDICE TATAL

It might take an inheritance to afford it, but this is one of the most awarome machine ever to land at COW,

By the Numbers

	VOODOO EGAD E710	ABS DIABLO X5
Manufacturer	Yeedoo PC	ABS
INC.	10/01	Tun
Operating System	Womans de Home	Bushen Af Police Col
Precouser (CPII)	2.8GHz Into. Pentium 4	2.8GHz Intol Pentium 4
Mutherbeard	ASUS P41533-C	ASUS P41533-C
Com.	Tifosi E710 chass-s	Custom case
Memory	ME Kinnilan Kebas kunah	SIZME NAVIGICAL POSTORA ESTAM
Hard Drive	RAID array	Deal COLIS Maryon MX6LG8OL drives in RAID stray
Grephica Processor	ATr 128MB Radeon 9700 (R300)	ASUS 128MB Nyidia Ceforce4 Ti 4600
Sound Card	Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer	Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer
DVD-ROM Brive	Plantor DVD-RDM/CD-RW combo drive	16X OVD-ROM drive
CO-KW Driver	N/A	AVU/IO CO TO FOR
Henitar	NEC Muit Sync FE1250+ 22"	NEC MultiSync FE991SB 19"
Spookleys	Amuse Programa 51	FIRST WARREST
Keybough	Logitech Cordless Desktop knyboard and mouse	Multimedia keyboard
March	Logostin Letitlets Betsite xocheans	USB mostay
Milaco Namy	USB 2.0; EEE 1394, SmartMedia and SD slots	USB 2.0, IECE 1394
BENCHMARKS		
3D0ameEauga 3.0 (1600x1200x32; no FSAA, no <i>MASCAR 2002</i> )	78.0	62.1
10 Garri Garriy 1 0 (1688x1200x32; 4x FSAA, no <i>MASCAR 2002</i> )	53.8	l del
3DGsme8euge 3.0 (1024x768x32; no FSAA)	61.2	97.3
3DGameGauge 3.0 (1024x768x32; 4x FSAA)	67.1	61.6
38Merk2004 SE Pro (1824x768x32; no (SAA)	15816	13393
38Mark2001 SE Pro (1024x760x32; 4x FSAA)	11449	6713
3DMark2001 SE Pro (1609x1200x32; no FSAA)	(113)	* 8400
3DMark200j SE Pro (1600x1200x32; 4x F3.6A)	6494	2143
Cushe M: Arona (1824x768x32; no PSAA)	289	247
Quehe III: Arono (1024×768×32; 4x FSAA)	206	F114
Omnite Mit Arono (1600x1200x32; no FSAA)	162	113
Oroke Ilk Arene (1600x1200x32; 4x F5AA)	91	43
Serious Saux 75E (1024x748x32; no FSAA)	109	102
Serious Sauc TSE (1024x768x32; 4x FEAA)	88	52
Jedi Knight It: Jedi Butanet (NIZA1768x32; no FSAA)	146	135
	146	







### **ABS Diablo X5**

Ain't no doubt, this rig is built to par-tay! By William O'Neal



PISTA THE ABS R. www.buyabs.com NAC \$2,794

I machines from outlits like Voodoo PC, Faicon North west, and Alienware are the Ferraris of gaming machines, then ABS rigs are more like Mustang Cobras. They might not be as sexy as machines built by the other boutques, but they are plenty fast and cost less.

Now, with the Diablo X5, ABS is trying to add a little spice to an already lechno ogically sweet package

The Diablo X5 that ABS sent us boasts just what you'd expect from a top-notch machine: a 2 8GHz Pentlum 4 processor, an ASUS P4T533-C motherboard, 512MB Kingston PC-1066 RDRAM, 160GB of storage in the form of twin 80GB Maxtor hard drives in a RAID array, a

Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer sound card, and a GeForce4 Ti 4600. What makes the Diablo X5 special is that for \$2,794 you get all this plus Klipsch ProMedia 5,1 speakers and a 19-inch NEC MultiSync monitor.

Although the Diabio X5 wasn't as fast as the Voodoo Egad that we also tested this month (see page 134), 99 percent of gamers would be more than pleased to play on this rig. It scored an incredible 13393 in 3DMark2001 SE Pro at 1024x768x32 with full-screen anti-aliasing turned off and 6713 with 4x FSAA turned on. The Diablo X5 even beat the Voodoo at Comanche 4 at 1024x768x32 with no FSAA, scoring 57 fps to the Voodoo's 55. But once we

With the Diablo X5, ABS is trying to add a little spice to an already technologically sweet package.

turned FSAA on or cranked up the resolution, the Voodoo Egad quickly surpassed the ABS.

The Diablo X5 ships with a list of components that are all class, although the excessive lights and faux brass fittings made it look a little cheesy. Also, the inclusion of that bizarre one click mouse makes no sense for gamers. I'd order the Diablo X5 with a Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer 3.0 instead

Had ABS's Diablo come equipped with an ATI Radeon 9700 Pro like the Voodoo, it might have been able to match the Voodoo in performance, and by the time you read this, Radeon 9700s will be readily available. But with a street price of \$2,794, the X5 will certainly do a gamer right.

VERDICT MARKET IN THE BETTER PRICE.



## Thrustmaster HOTAS Cougar

Casual gamers need not apply By Jeff Lackey

Mison Edit Thrustmaster T www.thrustmastar.com 80 \$299.95

Undows Windows 98/2000/ME/XP, USD port. DirectX 8 or higher, Pentlum or compatible processor

hrustmaster's HÖTAS Cougar throttle and stick system is a

serious piece of hardware targeted at the hardcore flight sim fanatic. Everything about this monster-its glossy black steel construction, 17-pound weight, 28 programmable buttons. programmable hall switches, 10 axes, and \$300 price tag-spells "serious," No other HOTAS

(hands-on throttle and

stick) system is

strength of the springs, it takes real effort to move the stick and hold it in an uncentered position. Some simmers love the feel, others hate it: if you are able to give it a test run, try before you buy. The Cougar stick also feels proposed into the X-Y axis in other words, resistance is higher in the diagonal directions, Simi arly, the throttle has superb

> functionality, but the position and strength of the detents (spots in the throttie's throw that click and provide resistance, indicating the idle and fumilitary positions) may be troublesame to some There are Web forums that provide modification instructions for these aspects.

The price and springs assure that the Cougar isn't for the casual

If you wear an oxygen mask when you fly sims, the Cougar may be for you.

programmable to the insane level of complexity that the Cougar is. Suffice it to say that you can program any combination of complex commands in a way that enables you to invoke them with a fick of the finger

In addition to its features, the Cougar's idiosyncrasies also prevent this from being an idea. setup for the casual pamer, and even for some in the hardcore market. The first surprise for anyone unfamiliar with Thrustmaster's joysticks is the

gamer, and it would be near blasphemy to use this hardware for a silly arcade game. But if you live for the next Faicon 4 SP update and wear an oxygen mask when you fly sims, the Cougar may be essential hardware for your virtual cockpit



its quirks and price make it less than ideal for everyday gaming, but Thrustmaster's HOTAS Cougar may be a hard core simmer's dream.



POWER

# Knowledge Is Good

ist month's hardware opener created

decided to open the section with two was reviews I knew that some people would be inhappy, but bey was Jim for a surprise. The last time CGW's hardware saction caused that of a stir was when i used this column = piace to exoraise my frustrations over the results of the 2000 presidential election is lot of people castigated to rying the pages of CGW with four pages of sercalle

C-crap many even pointing out that they don't buy this magazine to read about a dvine Ob, I guess some broads would like to see the Barne things written about every month: review of a really good Gefore-based graphic care and advice on which motherbeers you should buy, it's my belief, though, that it's good for all of Us to know what's ecine as in

computer gaming beyont which graphics card is the bast (ATI's Radeon 9700), which Bound Saro yeu Should buy (Creative Land Bound Siletter Audiov R-Gamer), an whether Inteliar AMD is winning the CPU wan (Intel):

The Whole/thin

il's good for us to m gamme

conings for of o On Granton feminal encounter that need with EGM's the "The Notorious C.H.E. Chou. I was talking see about how PCs are letter asming platforms than conscies: te Which Notarious coolly responded. "Sure, to some pames. For others conseles are kettel liftle cares enyway? I play games, no

ide, yet the famout from the Mac covered has not me thinking about the placing connection between FC samers and Ma Users. Both platforms, PC for caming and Macs for, well, everything, are under assaul Irom competitive afternatives that seem to Journa every day. And these threats he soft group: sating like troglodytes (def. 1.2.) 

Ultimately, holing up in a community whether terally of metaphorically, pretending the title professional transfer prefer to the community of taing to ensure that your platform of chalunvives. Rether, as gemers first, i The linew, good, and interesting on the Jamino front





# eDimensional TrackIR

How to get ahead in simming By T. Byzt Baker

light simmers are an obses-

e Dimensional Inc. III www.odimensional .com ### \$119.95

Management USB port

sive lot. They think nothing of dropping hundreds on the latest force-feedback HOTAS setup and enormous monitors, sometimes several, just to give them the feeling that they're actually going Mach 2. strapped into a Martin-Baker Mk.2 eject on seat instead of slouched in a ground-bound office chair. To those with a passion for simming and a lot of disposable income, I have one sug-

gestion: get a TrackIR.

up a target in your sights-without touching the keyboard, joystick, or mouse. I tested this device concurrently with some 3D LCD glasses, and the TrackIR did far more to suck me into a doglight than the grasses' 3D trickery did

The product works well out of the box with any game that supports mouse panning, and there is a small palch that lets you add support for Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002 The included software even lets

## If you play a lot of flight sims, the TrackIR is definitely worth the price.

The device books into a USB port and sits behind your keyboard or on your monitor It comes with a sheet of adhesive silver dots, and you must stick one of these dots on your forehead so the main unit can reflect an infrared beam off of it and translate the dot's movement into cursor movement, Move your head a little to the left, and you're watching the world slide by under your left wing. Tilt your head back, and you can get a visual through the top of your canopy on that bogey who's trying to outturn you.

You already have a hat switch, you say? Well, it can't provide you with the experience of being able to glance down at your instruments and smoothly check your six before lining

you configure the TrackIR as a hat switch for games that don't support mouse panning.

If you play a lot of flight sims, the product is definitely worth the price because there's no more cost-effective way to get the situational awareness it de ivers. The TrackIR gets you closer to the feeling of flying than any other peripheral can.

#### VERDICT, AAAA

If you can live with the pessibility that you might go to a dinner party with a silver dot fastened to your forehead, then this is a must-have for the flight sim fenetic who has it all.

## CH Fighterstick USB and CH Pro Throttle USB

You can please all of the people all of the time! By Jeff Lackey



Namiful fulls CH Products /// www.chproducts.com Na. \$150 each

He PHINE Windows 98/ME/2000/XP, one open USB port for each device, DirectX 73 or higher

H Products' top end HOTAS offerings, the Pro Throttle USB and Fighterstick USB, are rarities, they are capable of satisfying the needs of the sugerhardcore simmer vet casual gamers will be equally delighted with their

friendly design and

functionality. The heart of this setup is the Pro Throttle. Although not an exact replica of any actual fighter throttle, its design is superb in functionality and fee). A mode switch on the throttle allows multiple assignments for the three four-way hals, one eight way hat, three

> buttons, and mini-joystick. This means you can program about 70 commands for the throttle (and double that amount if you use the Fighterstick's shift-bulton feature) The throttle operates smoothly, is well built. and is dependable, and CH's products have a well-deserved reputation for tasting longer than the computers they re altached to. The Fighterstick

is CH Products' lop-of-the line joystick, Its myr ad buttons and hat switches will

The Fighterstick is a joy to operate and can do more than most folks require.

provide casual gamers with any programming options they might need. and hardcore simmers will appreciate its mode switch and shift-key capapilities, which result in more than 130 possible command or macro assign ments. Three LEDs on the Fighterstick and the Pro Throttle display which mode you're in

Ergonomically, the Fighterstick is well organized, although those with smaller hands may have to stretch to reach every bulton. Overall, the Fighterstick is a joy to operate and can do more than most folks require.

The only downside to the CH offerings is their skimpy documentation, but you can find most infor-

mation online. When you take Into consideration the broad range of needs between casual gamers and hardcore simmers, CH Products' Pro-Throttle and Fighterslick combo can't be beat.

They're pricey, but the quality, a functionality, and dependability e CH Products' joystick and throtti system is unsurpassed

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The amazing RADEON™ 9700 PRO is the fastest\* board ATI has every: created. Powered by VPU technology. it delivers the ultimate 3B gaming experience. It's the first to provide 8 pipulines for twice the rendering; power. The first to fully support DirectX® 9.0. And the first to deliver the highest level of realism possis. ble. Now you're unstoppable.

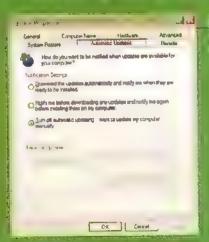
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WWW.computergaming.com 141

## Speed Tweak Windows XP

Ty internal Military is the analysis and the second of the



## STEP #1 MURDER THE MAINTENANCE APPS Start by choosing the

Start by choosing the System icon in the Control Panel. There are three things here to eliminate: System Restore, Automatic Updating, and Remote Assistance. Navigate to each tab, and check or uncheck the appropriate boxes and select the appropriate radio buttons to cleanse your system of these largely useless applications.

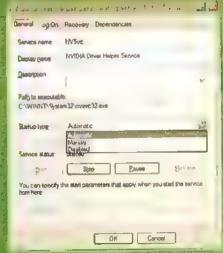


#### ಪಟ್ಟ STEP #2

WINDOWS MESSAGING Ready to kill that stupid little buddy (con that nobody uses? Choose Start and Run, and type C:\WINDOWS\ INF\SYSOC.INF. Substitute your Windows directory if necessary. This will open a text file that mattelously hides some programs from the Add/Remove Programs folder.

Find the line that starts with "msmsgs=" and edit the word "hide" out of it. Save the file, open Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs, and click on the Windows Components button. Scroll down, and you'll find Windows Messaging just waiting to be unchecked.

#### STEP #3 PURGE UNNECESSARY SERVICES Open Control Panel, select Administrative Tools, and then select Services, Here you'll see a list of things running in the background to enable certain functions of Windows XP. Some start automatically, and you don't need all of them. Turn them off by setting them to Manual: right-click on the service, choose Properties, pull down the Startup type box,



and select Manual, Some functions you will turn off include Automotic Updates, Error Reporting, Indexing, Internet Connection Fireway (unless you're using it), Messenger, NVIDIA Driver Helper, Portable Media Serial Number, System Restore, and Tosk Scheduler.

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#### لبنافس STEP #4 to a canal REIGN INSTHE SWAP Paging File Size (HD) Drive [Volume Label] 01 (Vin X) 1914 - 1910 when it first sets up the STUFF) paging file and then uses precious resources to hoong he are for selected three resize it. Take that D1 [SWAP] Dave Space available: control out of Windows' hands by making your ⊕ Que tom size: swap file nuge and 1500 Initial pare (HD): static. Open the Control , 1500 Magimum state (HB)z Panel and choose System managed size System, select the Set Ohio paging file Advanced tab, click on Total paging the size for all drives the Performance Minuoum alloweds 2 MB settings button, and go Recommended: 382 MB to the Advanced tab. Currently allocated: 300 MB There, you can set your own swap file size. If you Cancel have a large drive and

it 1000MB. Choose the Change button and make both the Initial and Maximum sizes 1000MB. Otherwise, make it as large as possible. You'll have to reboot when you're done.

#### STEP #5

enough free space, make

is a rip op structo Stantus Trans. Finally, you can purge your system tray of silly files by hitting them where they live: In your Startup folder and "run" registry key. The easy way to do this is to use the System Configuration Utility. Launch it by hitting the Start button and then choosing Run. Type MSCONFIG. Choose the Startup tab. Uncheck anything frivolous, like Creative Labs AudioHO: quick launchers from RealPlayer, MusicMatch, WinAmp, Kazaa, Microsoft Office; and—unless you use their special functions—hardware utilities like MouseWare and Microsoft SideWinder. The beauty of the System Configuration utility is that if you uncheck something and discover that part of your system doesn't work, all you have to do is go back in and check it again.

**Tech Medics** 

What Would I Do With \$5,000?!?

If you had a \$5,000 budget to build the best computer that you could for both gaming and graphics (Photoshop, Quark, and so on), which components Would you include and what brand would they be?

Matt

I'd spend about \$2,000 on an Athion XP 2200+ machine with 512MB of RAM and an ATI Radeon 9700 graphics card. I'd spend the other \$3,000 on 22-inch rims for my truck.

**Get a Paper Route!** 

I want to upgrade my computer. My current computer is a IGHz AMD Thunderbird with 256MB PC2100 DOR RAM, a 64MB GeForce2 MX400 and a 16X DVD-ROM, I have about \$300 to spend. What do you suggest I get?

knucks

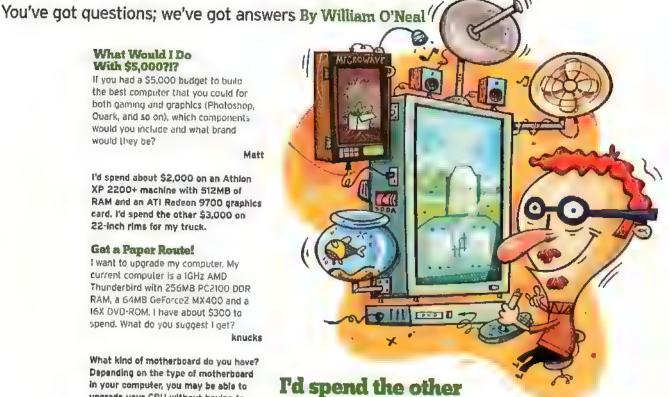
What kind of motherboard do you have? Depending on the type of motherboard in your computer, you may be able to upgrade your CPU without having to swap out your motherboard. If, however, you're unable to upgrade your CPU with your current board, I'd suggest getting a new graphics card and possibly more RAM. A 128MB GeForce4 TI 4200 WIII dramatically increase your machine's performance.

#### Not Another Boutique Computer Company

I have a real crappy computer and I'm trying to get my dad to buy a new one. found a site, buyaib.com, that has lowpriced PCs. It seems to be too good to be true, so I was wondering if you could tell me anything about them. But if a whole new PC fails with my dad (he keeps insisting that the computer is good, even though we got it five years ago) I might just upgrade I'm guessing you'll tell me to upgrade the CPU and video card, but it's a Pentium III 350MHz, with an ATI Rage Pro and 256MB of RAM

Adrian

Let's tackle your second problem first: you may went to consider building your own computer, it seems to me that your old machine has seen better days, and upgrading your CPU will require that you buy a new motherboard anyway. Considering that, you may want to think about putting together a



\$3,000 on 22-inch rims for my truck.

completely new system: motherboard. CPU, graphics card, and RAM. Now to your first question. I've never heard of AIB, but that doesn't mean that they suck. Prior to a few months ago, I had never heard of ABS, but apparently they've been around for damn near a decade. Your best bet is to check out the news groups or go to deja.com and search for "AIB" and "buyalb.com" to see what comes up.

Not Really a Question...

Let me start by stating that I'm an audio engineer, so I'm not just some dips\*\*\* talking out of his butt about this. On to the issue, I was reading the Tech Medics section recently, and there was a question about which inicrophone to buy, in your response you stated; "As for the hum, I don't know what would cause that other than a blown mic diaphraom "

Well that's probably the last thing that would cause it. It's probably due to either poor grounding or just radio frequency interference. Of those two, the RF interference is the more likely culprit. Computers give off tons of RF due to the electronics in them.

and most inexpensive microphones aren't shielded from such things, Just Drought you should know. Keep up the good work.

Jake Ostendorf

Thanks. However, that wasn't my response-that came from my predecessor Dave Salvator, He's officially blacklisted.

Which Mobo Am I Using?

Is there a way that I can find out which motherboard I have without cracking the case? I tried Dxdiag and didn't see anything useful in there. Did I overlook something, or is there somewhere else that I can look?

That's a tough one. Some BIOSes will tell you the make of your motherboard, but not necessarily the model number, during the POST. Also, in the Windows Device Manager you may be able to find out which chipset your motherboard is running, but again, not necessarily the make and model number. Anyway, your best bet is to just crack the case.

The best recipe for building your ultimate gaming machine By William O'Neal

t's been a while since I updated my Power Rig.
But of course, there hasn't really been a lot of
new and interesting stuff to put in it. That

changed recently in the span of about five days, First, I received Intel's latest top-of-the-line CPU, a 2 8GHz Pentium 4 with a 533MHz front-side bus. Before I had even installed the thing, ATI's 128MB Radeon 9700 Pro graphics card (also known as the "GeForce4 killer") showed up. By that point I was raring to go, and then I got my hands on IGB of Kingston PC-1066 RDRAM, Well, all right!

I set about testing my new Power Rig with 3DGameGauge 3.0, Dave Salvator and Loyd Case's latest test suite. The Power Rig scored an impressive 15140 on 3DMark2001 SE Pro at 1024x768x32 with F5AA turned off, More impressive, though, was the score of 10922 that the machine got at the same resolution with

4x FSAA turned on. The Power Rig lost out in Jedi Knight II. Dungeon Siege, and IL-2 Sturmovik to the Voodoo Egad that we tested this month, but it kept up in Serious Sam: TSE. Comanche 4, and Quake III: Arena



## Finally, I've gotten new stuff worthy of the Power Rig.

#### POWER RIG

COMPONENT	MANUFACTURER	PRICE
Operating System	Windows XP Home Edition	\$200
Motherboard	Intel D850MV	\$(50
Case	Anter Plus6608	
Processor	Intel 2 8GHz Pentium 4 w/ 533MGHz FSB	\$600
Memory	IGB Kingston PC-1066 RDRAM	\$400
Graphics Card	ATI 128MB Radeon 9700 (R300)	\$400
Monitor	NEC MultiSync FE1250+ 22"	5700
Hard Orive	120GB IBM DeskStar 7200 rpm	\$200
DVD-ROM drive	Toshiba 16X DVD/4BX CD-ROM	\$70
CD-RW Drive	Teac 40x/12x/48A	\$100
Sound Card	Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer	\$100
Speakers	Cambridge SoundWorks MegaWorks 5100	\$300
Mouse	Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer 3.0	\$50
Keyboard	Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro	\$50
TOTAL		\$3,440

#### BENCHMARKS

TEST 50	ORE
3DGameGauge 3.0 (1600x1200x32; no FSAA)	70.5
3DGameGauge 3.0 (1600x1200x32; 4x FSAA)	54.9
3DGameGauge 3 O (IO24x768x32; no FSAA)	68 2
3DGameGauge 3.0 (1024x768x32; 4x FSAA)	64.9
3DMark2001 SE Pro (1024x768x32; no FSAA)	15140
3DMark2001 SE Pro (1024x768x32, 4x FSAA)	10922
3DMark2001 SE Pro (1600x1200x32; no FSAA)	10697
3DMark2001 SE Pro (1600x1200x32; 4x F5AA)	6255
Quake III: Arena (1024x768x32; no FSAA)	280.1
Quake III: Arena (1024x768x32; 4x FSAA)	205-8
Quake III: Arena (I600x1200x32; no FSAA)	167.6
Quake III: Arena (1600x1200x32; 4x FSAA)	90.2

### Gamer's Edge Winning for dummies THE ARTIQUE Magic: The Gathering Online Building on a budget PAGE 146 You just snagged yourself DIRTIEST TRICK OF THE MONTH the gaming version of a riterion Collection DVD: the While waiting for more good WarCraft III tricks, we got a good one for that old standby, Jedi Knight II. WarCraft III: Gollectone €d/Hani One of my favorite tricks in Jedi aim it right-fall to his doom even if he Right before entering that room, Knight II is easy to do on the map Nar lands on something. What I mean by you'll see a control panel. If you get We're still waiting fer more caples of WarGraft III

Shadda Streets. First, make sure Force Push is at the maximum level. While you're fighting on this map, keep a lookout for any hotshots who are jumping around; there's always a couple of them. Start hunting the jumper and wait until he gets in the air, then use Force Push on him. When an enemy is in the air, he can't use the defenses against Push, so he'll go flying higher into the air and-if you

"aim It right" is that you force him up and over the gaps with your push.

My other favorite trick is very annoying. Make sure you are a Dark Sider and max out Force Grip, Now search for the map Death Star. Once you're in, make your way to the bottom area and find the trash compactor. Right next to the trash compactor is that big room that looks like part of the Death Star Cannon.

close to it, you activate a killing ray in the big room. Now wait for people to come your way. When someone approaches, use your Force Grip, move them into the big room, and then touch the switch. You don't have to see the switch for it to work. It's really funny watching them squirm in your grip and then die when the beam is turned on. Hope you like it.

-Scythe82

Gellector's Edition to grace our cubicles. Until they arrive, we're giving away this excellent-looking book, The Art of Wartraft, if you have only the regular varsion of WerCraft III, this book will almost make you teel a though you have the Collector's Edition





Zombie Boa can be blocked, but I can pay to specify a color that will be instantly destroyed if it tries to block the Boa. Shimmering Wings give a creature flying, and they can be easily pulled back into my hand and put

One reason I chose this deck was that I was fortunate enough to get four Tims, I have two Prodigal Sorcerers and two Stormscape Apprentices, For regenerating defense, I have an Urborg Skeleton, a blue Metathran Zombie, a Goham Djinn, a Nightscape Familiar, and Patchwork Gnomes, Among the other creatures I use to fill out my deck are two Stormscape Familiars that reduce the cost of black spalis and one Nightscape Familiar that reduces the cost of

Finally, I have some cards that will let me cycle through my cards laster by getting free draws (Cephalid Looter, Probe, Thieving Magpie, Scavenged Weaponry, Tainted Well, and Recover), Furthermore, I can knock cards out of Bruce's hand with Probe and Bog Down, Alas, if only I had some counterspells to really get the most out of my

I ended up with a lot of green, which is creature heavy, so I might as well build a creature deck. I'll fill it in with some interesting blue spells and fliers, because

creatures (for speed) and big ones (for power). Wild Mongrets are a decent 2/2 with a powerup, and Krosan Archer cap block fliers. The Springing Tiger is expensive, but at Threshold (seven cards in my prayeyard) it becomes a 5/5. Rabid Elephants get bonuses when blocked, and are pretty tough to begin with My Thought Devourer is big and It flies, so the hand reduction is worth it. Elephant Ambush gets me a 3/3 token for 4 mana, but it can be cast from my graveyard for its Flashback cost, essentially

I have a few soulrret cards I might as well include. Chatter of

#### GAMER'S EDGE

the Squirrel costs I mana and gets me a 1/t token. Nut Collector is much more expensive but can churn out a 1/I token each turn it's more useful for its Threshold ability to make all squirrels +2/+2. A Squirrel Nest gives me the ability to use a land to make a 1/I token every turn instead of tapping it for mana. Lastly, Druid's Call allows me to put out a 1/I token for every point of damage my enchanted creature does.

Aether Burst and Equilibrium, which can return a creature to its owner's hand, are there to clean out any of Tom's more difficult creatures if they get in my way. One turn without a key blocker is often all i'll need if I have my big creatures out.

#### First Match

Turn 1, Bruce: I drew the Squirrel Nest and a Chatter of the Squirrel, as well as a few forests. If Tom doesn't get some creatures out fast, I can possibly rush him.

Turn 2, Tom, So Bruce "Elf-hater" Geryk has a green deck? I have my regenerating Metathran Zombie out, but I need to keep the appropriate mana available during Bruce's turn. This is the dilemma of regenerators: they can tie up mana, which is a disadvantage early in the game.

Turn 3, Bruce: I play the Squirrel Nest this turn and get another Chalter of the Squirrel. I can play that card again for its Flashback cost, so I'm eventually getting four I/I tokens for 6 mana. Not too shabby.

Turn 4, Tom: I have a hefty Glant Cockroach out and I've put Scavenged Weaponry on it so it packs an extra punch. But he keeps throwing disposable squirrel tokens to block it, so I'm doing just minimal pest control. It's cockroaches versus squirrels: thrill to the scene of white-hot vermin-on-vermin action. It's going to be hard keeping up with all those dittle tokens. My best hope is to get a Tim or I wo into play to zap them.

Turn 5, Bruce: Even squirrels can have a nasty bile. I sent a squirrel rush at Tom this turn and he tried to block with his Glant Cockroach. Using a Giant Growth Instant, I turned my 1/1 token into a 4/4 menace and cleared out the Roach.











Always beware when someone playing green has cards in hand and one untapped forest. He may be hiding something!

Turn 7. Tom: With my regenerating Urborg Skeleton and Metathran Zombie, I can hold off the squirrels if he keeps attacking with them, but I can tell he's just building up the stupid little rodents to rush me. Whereas I'm limited by the number of creatures in my deck, his squirrel tokens have no such limitation. If I can get my Rushing River or Dematerialize card, I can take out that stupid Squirrel Nest.

Turn 9, Bruce: I think this is over. I not only got a Rabid Elephant out, but I also enchanted it with a Druid's Cail, which puts another squirrel token out for each point of damage it takes. Iom doesn't have anything that can kill the elephant, so he's forced to use regenerating creatures to block it. He gets the creature back, but the Druid's Call still gives me another squirrel. Even if he gets another big creature or two out, he can't stop the rodents forever.

Turn II, Tom: I finally get Dematerialize and go to cast it on the Squirrel's Nest, only to have









Bruce whip out something called Syncopate, a card that counterspells my card unless I can pay extra mana, which I can't And the squirrels keep coming-still no Tims. I do, however, have a Plague Spitter, which causes 1 point of damage to all creatures and players during the upkeep phase and would be great for wilping out all those squirrels. Unfortunately, I'm too low on health to bring it out.

Turn 14, Bruce: I've been able to rush Tom the last two turns and overwhelm his defenses. He doesn't survive this turn.

#### Second Match

Turn 1, Bruce: Tom obviously fixed this game because I draw no lands, and therefore have to multigan. Even my second draw nets me only an island.

Turn 4, Tom: My regenerating Urborg Skeleton is across the table from Bruce's Cephalid Scout. I'm doing fine with lands but Bruce has only islands out. I'm hoping his hand is clogged with green creatures. I bring out a Glant Cockroach that should be able to power over any weak blue biockers he gets out. This is an auspicious beginning.

Turn 5, Bruce: My Thought Devourer will force my hand size down to three, which is no great loss considering I'm mainly holding expensive green spells I can't use yet. But I need to be able to keep that Giant Cockroach at bay

Turn 5, Tom: This is the perfect time to play Bog Down, a sorcery card that will knock cards out of Bruce's hand. As a kicker cost, I can burn two of my own lands to make him discard three cards instead of two. As he has only three cards in his hand. I think it's well worth the cost.

Turn 6, Bruce: I need either a forest or a Diligent Farmhand, a 1/1 creature I can sacrifice in order to search through my deck and find a basic land. I put two Farmhands into the deck for precisely this reason. But not only am I short on land, I'm short on Farmhands. I feel like a bankrupt cotton farmer.

Turn 7, Tom: I just drew Oppression, which will be the equivalent of pouring sait in Bruce's wounds. With this fairly expensive black sorcery card in play, each player will have to discard a card from his hand to cast a spell. Because Bruce's hand is empty and I have cards to spare.

this is perfect for me. Bruce has an annoying powerful filer and a few weak creatures in the way, but I think this will slow him down enough that he won't be able to bounce back.

Turn 10, Bruce: This is supposed to be a fast deck, so if I don't get creatures out early, it's tough to get momentum back. The Cephalid Logter helps me cycle through my cards, but the forced discard means that I can cast a spell only If I have another disposable card in hand.

Turn 12, Tom: I'm realizing that one weakness. of this deck is that it can't inflict a tot of damage. Bruce is almost completely helpless. and I was still having a hard time gelting past his blockers. I had a Prodigal Sorcerer plinking away at his hit point, but otherwise, I couldn't get through-until now, I just put a Traveler's Cloak on my Threving Magpie, giving it islandwalking so Bruce can't block it. The beauty of this little combo is that every time I damage him, I get to draw a card, For good measure, I use my Prodigal Sorcerer to fatally Tim the Cephalid Looter he was using to draw cards.

Turn 13, Bruce: I finally got the Farmhand out. but Tom's Prodigal Sorcerer just pinged it away, I'm not interested in sitting here and being killed by one damage point per turn from that bird, so I'm going to concede and hope I can win the rubber game.

#### Third Match

Turn 1, Bruce: Lots of forests, I got burned by not drawing any land last game, so I'm rejuctant to mulligan, i'd rather hold onto the land, which t can play each turn, and hope that I get creatures out eventually, rather than take the risk of having to discard creatures because . don't have the land to play them.

Turn 3, Tom: I bring out Arcane Laboratory, an

annoying card that limits players to casting one spell each turn. Bruce seems to have a lot of cheap creatures, so this might slow him down. Meanwhile, I have a Tim out to plink away at him. without being limited by the Arcana Laboratory.

Turn 4, Bruce: Because I have the land to eventually be able to cast all my creature spells. Tom's Arcane Laboratory doesn't scare me too much. The fact that we can play only one spell per turn means there will probably be fewer creatures out than usual. I haven't seen any really nasty creatures in Tom's deck, so as long. as I can play my big gons wisely, I'll have the advantage in the endgame.

Turn 4, Tom: Now I'm Timming away with a second Tim.

Turn 5, Bruce: I put Rabid Elephant out, Tom doesn't have any of those regenerating creatures. In play yet. When you have the advantage like this, it's best to press it unless you know your opponent has an instant that can counter it, like Glant Growth

Turn 6, Tom: First squirrels, then elephants. What is this, Zoo Tycoon? Someone needs to explain to Bruce that Magic is supposed to be about goblins and dragons and that kind of thing. I have a really powerful black creature called a Goham Djinn that can easily take on his Rabid Elephant, plus it can regenerate. And guess what Bruce does when I summon it? Yep. out comes the frigging Syncopate counterspell. Thanks to the Arcane Laboratory, I can't cast another spell this turn.

Turn 8, Bruce: With still no regenerating blockers in sight, I can build up my Rabid Elephant so that Tom has to either lose a creature to it each turn or take massive. damage. Blanchwood Armor, which adds +1/+1 for each forest in play, gives the elephant +4/+4 Feet the pain, Tom!

Turn 8, Tom: He's not attacking with that big mamma,amma elephant yet, but it's just a I can't attack Bruce for now. My options for

game, Bruce asks why I didn't just use my Stormscape Apprentice to tap Rabid Elephant so it couldn't block me, I politely explain that the Apprentice has to spend white mana to do this, which comes from Plains, which I don't have. you moron. Then Bruce points out that I could have used my Oream Thrush's ability to convert a land to a Plain, which could have gowered the Apprentice. I pretend I noticed this but didn't do it because I needed to save the mana for something else)

Turn 10, Bruce: I'm getting very lucky, and now have Seton's Desice on my Rabid Etephant, Last turn I got my Cephalid Looter out. If I get one more card that I need, there could be fireworks.

Turn 12, Tom: It's like that elephant just eats one of my creatures each turn.

Turn 14, Bruce: Yowzal Got It. My strategy now is to discard enough cards with my Cephalid Looter to reach Threshold guickly, You'll see why in a minute.

Turn 14, Tom: He's been fishing for some card. because he's using his Cephalid Looter to draw extra cards. I don't know what he has up his sleeve. I'm regretting the Arcane Laboratory. because I have several things I can do, but being able to cast only one spell each turn really slows me down.

Turn 15, Bruce: My only spell this turn is Overrun, which gives all my creatures +3/+3 and Trample until the end of the turn. With five forests out, my Blanchwood Armor makes my Rabid Elephant an 11/12, and Seton's Desire makes it a 13/t4. What is most important. though, is that thanks to my Cephalid Looter, 1 have discarded enough cards to reach Threshold, and Seton's Desire forces Tom to block the Rabid Elephant with every creature that can do so. Because the Rabid Elephant gets +2/+2 for each creature blocking it, and because this is Trample damage, his creatures are basically committing suicide. I don't quite finish the match.





# Neverwinter Nights A beginner's quide to quest making By Mark Asher

ith Neverwinter Nights, gamers at

p aying games without having a C++ back propped open near the monitor. The Aurora toolset is willout a doubt the finest set of tools ever released to gamers, and already fans have authored more than 800 Neverwinter Nights mods. Here's a guide to getting started with these easy-to use tools.

#### Before You Begin

Before you even open the toolset, you should take pen and paper and jot down a few ideas. Which areas do you want to model? How many NPCs will you use? What levels will your mod be designed for? Will you want to run it in dungeon master (DM) mode? Will you want others to download it and play it without benefit of a DM? Will there be a story behind it? Take a lew minutes to outline what you want to do, Here's my outline.

- Two areas: a forest and a crypt
- Two main bad guys: an Orc leader and a zombie lord
- Designed to run without a DM
- A simple story: a woodsman has had his ring stolen by the Orc leader. The player will defeat the Orc leader and his troops. The player will then receive a key to the crypt, go in, and fight the zomble lord and his undead.

Create your own Neverwinter Nights modules using th Nights Toolself

What would you like to do?

- Create a new Module
- Open an existing Module

Servants of the Spider Queen TheAnvielOfRas Shadows in the Dark TheGreatCrossroads Devil's Brew The Halls of Advanced Training Dungeon of Doom

- Start normally
- Show this screen at staitup

OK Figure 1 ■ We'll make it for a single Level I player.

That's about it. Let's get going on the steps below to get you comfortable with using the toolset for creating your own module.

#### Using the Wizard

BioWare has made things especially easy with wizards. Selecting the Toolset option when NWN loads launches a wizard that steps you through most of what you need to do. (See Figure 1)

Select the Create a New Module option; click through the Welcome popup

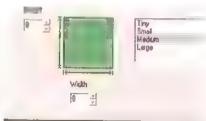
Enter a name for your module. We'll call ours "Computer Gaming World adventure."

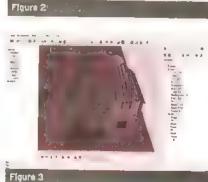
Now create an area for your module. We'll create a forest orea first. Click on the Area. Wizard Judton.

In the Name and Tileset popup, enter a name for the area you're creating and select an appropriate treset from the fist. We'll keep it simple and call ours "Forest" and select the forest theset. The Area Wizard popup appears.

warge areas in NWN are made up of 10-meterby-10-meter tikes. The default, which we'll use, is Medium, which is made up of 8-by 8 tiles. (See 1994 1) Affer clicking on Next, the Finish populp displays. The Open Area in Area Viewel opt on is selected by default. Click on Finish to see your forest area in the viewer.

Click on Finish again and then exit the toolset







Save your adventure when prompted. Now start NWN as a single-player game, find your adventure, and road it.

#### **Editing Your Initial Area**

Now to fix up our forest. Load the toolset again and select the module you just created. First, note that you can't elevate terrain in most triesets. If you want a hill, you have to use the Rural tileset to elevate terrain; so if you want a wooded area with hills, you'l have to put them in manually. (One tileset that you can elevate is City Exterior.)

Also note that to remove something you have placed, you select the Undo opt on if you want to remove objects that were generated by the tileset, like trees in the Forest set, use the Eraser option under Terrain in the right-hand pane. After you select it, click on the tile you want to change. The tile will cycle through various designs, including one without trees.

After you load your module, you have to select the area you want to edit. We have only one area so far. Expand the list under Areas in the left pane of the Toolset window. When you find the Forest area, double-click on it to load it.

Now that the forest is loaded, let's create a house for our woodsman NPC. Move to the bottom-right corner of the tieset. Then in the right-side pane, under Groups, select the Lodge 2x2 object and drop it in the corner. You can right-click to rotate the building before you drop it in the corner.

We want the player to interact with the woodsman, so let's set an appropriate start location, which is where a player will initially start the adventure. By default the center of the area is the starting location, but let's put it just to the left of the woodsman's fine new home. Select the Paint Start Location button on the right side of the right pane and then click in tront of the lodge.





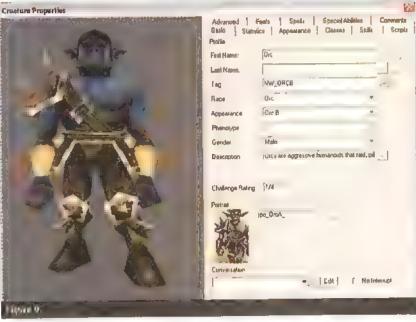




Now we can add areas for our other imporlant encounters. We'll include a campfire for the Orc leader and his cohorts. We'll put it in the upper felt cur for of our Llesel, Under Groups select the Camp 1 2x2 object and drop it in, (See Figure 5.)

Now we'll put in the entrance to the crypt we're going to make a little later. The entrance ones in the upper-right corner of the tileset. Under Groups select the Ruin 12x2 object and drop it in (See Figure 6.

We've covered the basics in this tileset, but let's drop in some more objects to make the



forest interesting. Along the left side of the fileset, we'll put a stream to help define the edge of the tile. And let's include a few big trees and a road that winds from the woodsman's lodge up through the middle of the tileset to the top center of the tileset. You'll find all these objects in the right pane when Paint Terrain is selected. You can add tots of other cool things, like a humanoid cage in the Orc camp or webbed areas to make a place look creepy or serve as a home for glant spiders, for example,

#### Adding NPCs and Monsters

Now for the really fun part: dropping in some monsters and adding our woodsman NPC.

First we'll populate our Orc camp. Select the Paint Creatures button in the right pane, select Humanoid, and then select Orc to see the fist of available Orcs.

There are two basic Orc types. One carries a sword, the other a bow. Put one of each near the fire, select them individually, and rotate them to face the fire. The rotate buttons are found at the bottom center of the screen below the view of the tileset. Next drop in an Orc chieftain near the fire. The analysis of the tileset.

Right-click on one of the Orcs and select Properties to examine it. Here you can view and change a lot of interesting things, including the hit points and other stats. (See Figure 9.) Look at the challenge rating. For the chieftain, it is 10. This number roughly corresponds to the monster's level. The chieftain is way too tough, so let's lower his rating. You can do this in several ways, but we'll take the easy route and just lower his hit points from 120 to 15.

Now let's add more monsters for the player to fight wolves, goblins, more Orcs, ghasts,

bears, and our woodsman, a common male Human.

The idea is to give the player some monsters to fight so the player will be at Leve. 2 when it's time to go into the crypt. Put the monsters in, save the mod, and test it with a new character to see if you have enough monsters. You have to be careful to space the monsters for enough apart so that they don't all converge on the player at once. Also, be aware that the monsters will attack the woodsman if they get close enough.

You can also add monsters by using the Encounters feature. This method keeps your module more flexible: the game will adjust the difficulty and number of monsters based on the size of the player party and its members levels. If you go this route, you might want to set the spawn point out of the player's view so that the monsters don't seem to magically appear.

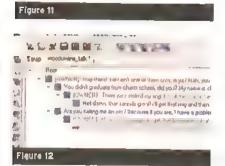
#### Adding the Story

Now to spice up our adventure with some story. We'll give the woodsman a tale to tell when the player interacts with him, it seems he's had a magic ring stolen by some Orcs. If you could retrieve it for him, he'll reward you and tell you the legend of the crypt. To create the story, we need to add some conversation to the NPC and add a magic ring to the Orc chieftain's inventory.

Let's get the hardest part out of the way Right-click on the Human you added to represent the woodsman and select Properties. Let's change his name to "Woodsman.

Click on the Tag button to give him a unique tag Change "NW\_CREATURE\_OD" to "Woodsman," Under the Advanced tab, make him a Plot character, which makes him invu





nerable. (See Figure 10.) Close the Properties window and right-click on the woodsman again. This time select Add to Palette to add the woodsman as a custom NPC. You will be asked to select a category for the woodsman to appear under, Make sure you're on the Basic tab and then click on Category and add him to the NPCs-Humans category.

Now we need to add conversation and have the woodsman give the player a quest to find that magic ring. First we'll add a quest to the journal, Select Journal Editor from the Toots In the Journal Editor window, chick on the Add button near the top. This adds a new journal entry. Edit the entry to read "Woodsman's Quest," Now click on the Add bitton three times to add three new entries nested beneath the Woodsman's Quest entry. Edit the first to read "Retrieve the woodsman's ring," the second to read "Return to woodsman," and the third to read "You have retrieved the ring and returned to the woodsman." Check the Finish Category box, (See Figure 1) : Note that the XP field in the Journal window is for notes only; to add XP to a quest you need to script it in,

Now we'll add the conversation that gives the quest to the player. We will create two conversations, but they will be in the same file. We'll have the initial conversation when the player receives the quest from the woodsman, a conversation that occurs if the player returns to talk to the woodsman without completing the quest, and a final conversation that takes place after the player completes the quest. Here's where the process gets a bit weird

the conversations will be fisted in reverse order. We're doing a bit of scripting here. When it's done, the whole conversation will look like what you see below (without the words in bold type):

#### Last conversation

Woodsman: Did ya find it? Did ya get my ring? Player: Not yet, old-timer,

Pfayer: Easy as pie! What's my reward? Woodsman: Fantastic! New that I think about it, why don't you keep the ring? You might find it handy if you decide to investigate the crypt up north. Watch out for the undead though!

#### First conversation

Woodsman: Hey there! You ain't one of them Orcs, is ya? Nah, you don't smell bad enough to be one of them, though you ain't no daisy

Player response option 1: You didn't graduate from charm school, did you? My name is (FullName). Why are you so antsy?

Woodsman: Them Orcs stole'd my ring, I'd kill them until they was dead, but my arthritic is acting up. Hey! How about you kill them? I'll give you a reward!

Player: Hot damn, that sounds great! I'll get that ring and then get my reward. You may be a crazy old coot, but you're coo!

Player response option 2: Are you calling me an Orc7 Because if you are, I have a problem with that

Woodsman: Now, now, youngster, get that battle-ax out of your rear. I don't talk much to people and I forget my manners sometimes. It's just that those blasted Orcs stole my magic ring. Hey, why don't you fetch it for mel I'll give you a reward.

Player: Hot damn that sounds great! I'll get that ring and then get my reward. You may be a crazy old coot, but you're coot:

Select the woodsman and right-click on him to bring up the Properties window. Near the bottom of the Basic screen, click on the Edit bullon to the right of the Conversation field. This brings up the Conversation Editor window.

In the Conversation Editor window, click on the Add button to add a new conversation. An input Text window appears, Just type in the woodsman's greeting. Work the Orc angle into this opening bit. How about "Hey there! You ain't one of them Orcs, is ya? Nah, you don't smell bad enough to be one of them, though you ain't no daisy."

Now we add the player's response, We'll keep it simple and give the player just a couple of possible responses. For the first conversation path, with the woodsman's conversation selected, click on Add and type into the Input Text window: "You didn't graduate From charm school, did you? My name is «FullName». Why are you so antsy?" You'll see that your statement is now nested under the woodsman's lines. The «FullName» variable will insert the player's name in the sentence.

Now we need the woodsman to respond With the player's conversation selected, click on Add again and type, "Them Orcs stole'd my ring, I'd kill them until they was dead, but my arthritic is acting up. Hey! How about you kill them? I'll give you a reward!"

We want the player to accept the quest, so we'll give him just one response. With the woodsman's second snatch of conversation selected, click on Add again and type, "Hot damn, that sounds great! I'll get that ring and then get my reward. You may be a crazy old coot, but you're coot!" Now select the Other Actions tab in the Conversation window and click on the Journal drop-down menu and select Woodsman's Quest. This will update the player's journal and add the quest,

Now for a bit of variety, we'll add a second conversation path. Select the woodsman's initial greeting again, click on Add, and type, "Are you calling me an Orc? Because if you are, I have a problem with that." With this statement selected, click on Add again and type, "Now now, youngster, get that battle-ax out of your rean I don't talk much to people and I forget my manners sometimes. It's just that those blasted Orcs stole my magic ring...Hey, why don't you fetch it for me! I'll give you a reward."

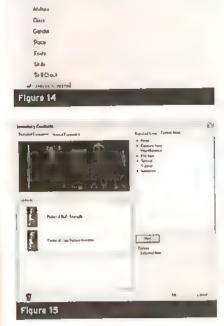
With this response from the woodsman selected, click on Add again and retype the player's "Hot damn!" response, Again, use the Other Actions option to add the Woodsman's Quest to the player's journal

Now go back and add the last conversation (Starting with "Did ya find it? Did ya get my ring?"). Select that conversation and select the "Text Appears When..." tab. Click on the Script wizard button (the far-right button next to the brank Conversation field). You'll see a new window with a list of variables. Select the Local Variable checkbox, Enter "nFirstTimeTalked" in the empty field in the upper right and then enter "I" in the field in the Inwer right. Click on Add and then Next, Now rename the script something like woodsman! and hit Finish. What we've done is set a condition for the text to appear. We've told the game not to display this bit of conversation until the variable nFirstTimeTalked equals I.

Now we'll move down to the next bit of conversation nested under the root, "Hey there! You ain't one of them Orcs, is ya?" Select this, select the Actions Taken tab, and start the Script wizard. Select Set Local Variables. Enter "inFirstTimeTalked" in the empty field in the upper right and then enter "i" in the field in the lower right and finish the wizard. Now we're making the game selections.

What loos	f variables is	ave to be set?	
TP TALL PROPERTY	e aeniernab ()	to be salk	
	pi wj	InfratfaneFalued	
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	COFFIGER TE	w; pl	Add
	l.	tical Expressions	

What conditions would you like to test for?



the variable when it runs this part of the conversation.

The sequence works like this: The first time the player talks to the NPC, the variable hasn't been set yet so the "Did ya find it?" bit of conversation is skipped, and the "Hey there!" bit is what the NPC says. After he says it, the variable is set thanks to the script we made. The next time the player talks to the NPC, the 'Did ya find it?" conversation will take place because the condition has been met.

Now select the "Easy as piel What's my reward?" part of the conversation, and use the Script wizard to tell it to look for the ring in the player's inventory. Select the Item in inventory checkbox and click on Next.

Now enter the tag name for the magic ring (which we haven't made yet but will). The tag name will be WoodsmansRing, so enter that now.

#### Adding the Quest Item

Now we'll add the magic ring to the Orc gader's inventory.

- Find the Orc leader, right-click on him, and select Properties.
- Click on the Inventory button to display the Inventory Contents screen.
- Select the Custom Items tab and click on New Conference (Conference)
- Scroll down, select Ring, and click on Next
- Now we need to name it. Let's call it WoodsmansRing. You also need to designate it as a magical item, and then select the level range and the quality. We'll go with 1-5 and high quarity. Click on Next.
- Select the category it will be listed under Because it's a quest item, we'll put it under

Piot. Click through the rest to finish making the ring.

Now we need to give the ring its magical properties. Select the ring under Plot, right click on it, and select Properties. Note the tag name for the ring, which should be WoodsmansRing

Select the Properties tab and remove the current magic properties using the arrow button. Scroll through the list of available properties and select Damage Reduction +3, Dark Vision, and Freedom of Movement. Use the arrow key to move them to the Assigned Properties list.

Check the identified box so the player doesn't have to identify the ring

Now return to the inventory Contents window and select the Custom tab. Find the ring and drag it from Custom to the Standard Equipment contents area and check the Droppable box. This causes the ring to drop as treasure when the Orc leader is slain.

#### Adding the Crypt

We'll be duplicating a lot of the steps we performed when we made the forest area, so let's get through this quickly

Start the Module wizard and use the Area wizard to create the crypt. Select the Crypt tileset and use the default medium size. Be sure to name your module

You'll start with a center tile in the Crypt tileset. Shrink the view and you can see the complete area, which is dark except for the center piece. Use the Paint Terrain Lools to lay out the rest of the crypt. You might find it easier to place a floor tile in a corner and paint the starting location there. Ours is a simple design: it's a linear dungeon crawl with a series of rooms connected by corndors and doorways.

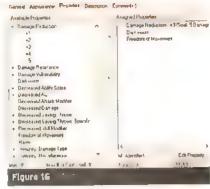
After you lay out the crypt, populate it with monsters and objects. To stay in theme, let's put in only undead monsters. The zomble ford goes at the end, of course. He's too hard as is, so we towered his hit points from 120 to 50. You can also paint objects like braziers, barrefs, garbage, signs, chests, and so on. You can paint visual objects, like rays of light, flames, and magic sparks. You can also add sound effects, like creepy music. If you decide to add traps, it's a good idea to make them hurt but not kill if you don't want to frustrate your players.

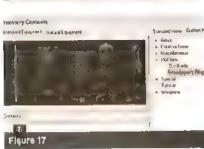
When you've finished adding monsters and objects, save your crypt and test it with a Level 3 or Level 4 character

#### **Adding Area Transitions**

This is the final piece in the puzzle. We need to link our two areas together with an area transition.

- In the forest, place an area-transition trigger in the ruins. Add a waypoint next to it.
- Do the same in the crypt near the starting point.







- Give each waypoint a specific tag-this is very important. Remember the tag name for each point.
- Set the forest area transition to the crypt waypoint.
- Set the crypt area transition to the forest waypoint.

That's It! Of course, it is a bit easier to use doors because doors don't need waypoints. Keep that in mind when you're building your mods. It would be easy enough to add stairs going up from the crypt and then drop in a door if you like

#### Get to Modding

Hopefully, you can see how easy it is to make playable mods with the Aurora toolset. The only tricky part is the scripting. It is programming, but the game holds our hands a bit with clever wizards.

There are also many examples of scripts to be found at BioWare's Website and at various NWN fan sites. Plus, if you plan on DM-ing your mods, you don't even need scripting. You can make up conversations on the fly and drop quest items into a player's inventory. So go forth and mod already!



## WarCraft III: Reign of Chaos

Your guide to Human heroism and victory by the last the



Il four races in WarCraft III present unique play styles. Each race has different strengths and weaknesses

and requires different strategles. While Humans might be considered boring when compared to the other races, they're a great first race to play because they offer good me ee units, excellent spels, and strong siege and air support.

#### Hero Selection

The first big decision you make when you start the game is which hero to recruit. Your first hero in a general situation should be the archmage. But if you go with the archmage, resist the temptation to pick Blizzard as your first spell. Although it's not as sexy, Water Elemental is actually a better spell, it does more damage than Blizzard in the long run, and also provides another target for enemy units to concentrate on. This increases the longevity of your units and saves you resource costs, You can always pick Blizzard later, but Water Etemental is more helpful in the early game, and becomes better as you add levels. You can have up to four summoned water elementals at a time, which is also a bonus. They are the strongest of all summonable creatures, except

for the infernal created by the Dread Lord's ultimate spell, Inferno.

After you select Water Elemental, you should choose Mana Regeneration so that you can generate spells quickly. It's a great help when you add another hero and spellcasters to your army. Next you can choose Bilzzard or opt for a second-level Water Elemental spell. When you can learn Mass Teleport, you should, as it gives you unequated movement ability.

Your second hero choice depends on which strategy you want to adopt. The mountain king is the strongest melee unit and has the best attack spelis for taking out multiple melee units and heroes. The paladin, though, has much better defens ye skills.

I facing Undead, you want to go with the paladin. And indeed, if you are certain of fighting Undead, the paladin might be your best first choice. His Holy Light spell can destroy Undead easily, and his other skills are all good to have. The paladin's Divine Shield can be the difference between victory and defeat. At high levels, it gives you 30 seconds to attack enemy heroes with impunity, in addition, while under the effects of Divine Shield, the paladin is immune to spells, such as the Dread Lord's



annoying Sleep spell. If in doubt about which skill to choose, Devotion Aura is always good. The mountain king is a good choice if you

The mountain king is a good choice if you foresee facing swarm units, like Orc grunts or Night Elf huntresses. His Thunder Clap is a great



skill to use against massed melee units because it damages and slows all surrounding units. The radius of the attack is actually large enough to catch nuntresses, despite their range. The mountain king is also your best choice for taking down heroes because two of his skills are hero killers; Storm Bolt and Thunder Clap, Both will stun or slow a hero, preventing him from freeing effectively and giving you free reign to pummel him. You should use the mountain king's ultimate spell, Avatar, just as you enter battle. Not only does he become truly powerful, but he is also immune to spells, which is great in the later game when enemy heroes are trying to stop you with spells like Entangling Roots, Warstomp, and the like.

When you have your heroes, scouting will reveal to you your enemy. Depending on whom you're fighting, your strategles could vary widely.

#### Versus Orce

Orcs are in many ways the mirror image of the Humans. Both have strong melee units, but whereas the Humans favor defense, the Orcs rely on sheer offense. Orc melee units already do the most damage of any units in the game, but the horde also has some great abilities that pour on the damage. In the middle of the game, the Orcs can get the kodo beast, which adds \$2 to \$4 damage to each unit. And in the late game, the shaman gets the Bloodlust speli,

which boosts a unit's attack speed by roughly 50 percent. By the end of a long game, you could be facing Orc taurens that can dish out an average of 50 damage per hit and attack as fast as knights!

Therefore, you must research all the armor upgrades as early as possible to offset the Orcs' great advantage in metee damage. And once the Orc player gets Bloodlust, you must use the priest and research his inner Fire spell, which gives your units a +5 armor borus to balance out the increased Bloodlust damage. The sorceress is also an essential unit in the midgame, because her Slow spett will hinder the Orc offensive. Her Polymorph spell can be used to neutralize enemy taurens and shamans. Because the Orc's Dispel Magic ability is an offensive spell on enemy units, it can't be used to neutralize your Slow and Polymorph spells.

The footmen's defend ability isn't crucial because the Orcs don't have a lot of piercing attacks. Also, you needn't worry about Orc air units, because your riflemen, gyrocopters, and gryphon riders can easily deal with Orc wyvern riders. Conversely, because your air power is superior to the Orcs', you'll use gryphon riders and gyrocopters to destroy enemy expansions and bases. The Orc player will have to counter you with troll headhunters, which you can then run over with knights and footmen.

#### Versus Night Elves

The Night Elves are a very tough race to fight if you play Human, especially because even a small pack of huntresses can quickly snowball into a swarm that no footman or rifleman defense can withstand. The key to fighting the hight Elves is to prevent them from amassing their huge Huntress armies. If they do, there is little you can do to fend off the torrent of moon glaives. Unfortunately, a good Night Elf player can have huntresses very early in the game, so it is imperative for the Human player to go on the offensive early against the Elves.

As soon as you can, harass the enemy with massed lootmen. If you do this, you must research the defend ability so that you can withstand Night Elf archers' attacks, Having this advantage you will easily cut through the enemy's archer defenses. You'll also want to go with the archmage as your first hero and choose Water Elemental as your first spell Water elementals are a good counter to the archdruid's treants (which will undoubtedly be called on to make quick work of your footmen rushes). The summoned water elementals are also good against huntresses, should the Night Eli player manage to avoid your early rushes and come back at you with those units. Your strategy should be to run the Night Elf player into the ground, because it you let them set up an Intricate attack or a mass of huntresses early on, you will have a hard time defending yourself.

In the mid- to late game, your knights will be excellent counters against the huntresses, and the enemy will have to go with druids of the talon and claw to battle you. Be careful not to invest too heavily in magic, because the Night Elf dryad will be able to dispel any negative







spells you cast, like Polymorph, Slow, and even your Water Elementals. Good Night Elf players will be able to thwart your magic. Instead, press the attack with upgraded knights and riflemen, and be sure to target the dryads and druids first. Learn to identify and destroy the druid of the talon, because he will decimate your army with Cyclone and Faerie Fire. Make sure you have the priest's Inner Fire to counter the Faerie Fire effect.

#### Versus Undead

The Undead are also a tricky race to fight. They have excellent air capabilities so you have to watch out for brigades of gargoyles harassing your supply lines. And you have to contend with the overwhelming swarm of skeleton warriors, Your melee units are about evenly matched with

the Undead melee units, although theirs are cheaper and faster to build. Be sure to upgrade your weapons and armor to maintain a slight edge over them. Be wary of crypt friends, which have tots of hit points and a potent long-range attack. They are stronger than riflemen and very hard for footmen to take down. You'll have to research the defend skill to fight crypt flends, and you'll need concentrated riflemen as backups.

You'll want to have a paladin hero around to destroy the Undead units quickly and to provide better defense to frustrate the Undead attackers. If facing hordes of skeletons, you should research the priest's Dispel Magic power, which can destroy skeletons in an area quickly. The computer actually uses this tactic very well, and you should emulate it. While your

upgraded knights can withstand a barrage of sketetons, you'll have a much easier time facing the Undead if your priests can simply wish sketetons away

Because an Undead player can get to gargoy, es very quickly, you'll want to have riflemen as a staple in your army early on. You'll already want to do that to counter the Undead crypt flends, but this is a gentle reminder to make sure that by the end of the game you have many quntoting Dwarves around lest you find yoursell helpless against a sudden rush of stone-faced fillers. Because the gargoyles are adept at picking off your peasants, build several guard towers around your lumber and gold sites to ward against this sneaky tactic.

Be wary of the Undead's Dread Lord hero. His Sleep ability is deadly: it can quickly neutralize a large army. Target him as quickly as possible with concentrated large.

Armor and Weapon Types

WarCraft III, like StarCraft, has a subtle underlying system that rules combat mechanics. There are the obvious stats, like hit points, attack damage, and armor, but underneath It all is the armor and weapon system. Each unit has three attack types: normal, plercing, or siege (the fourth-chaos-is used only in single player mode). There are five armor types. light, medium, heavy, fortified, and hero (only for heroes: duh). Low-end melee units have medium armor; high-end melee and air units have heavy armor; and ranged units and spelicusters have light armor. Buildings all have fortified armor.

Consult this chart to see how each armor type fares against each attack type:

	Normal	Pierce	Siege
Light	150%	75%	50%
Medium	100%	100%	100%
Heavy	100%	150%	100%
Fortified	50%	35%	150%
Hero	100%	50%	50%

For example, a rifleman that does 20 piercing damage on an attack deals 30 damage to a heavy-armor Orc wyvern rider, 15 damage to a light-armor troll headhunter, and 20 to a medium-armor grunt. The different values mean that most melee units are great against ranged units and casters, while ranged units are the best counter to high-level units and air units

#### **Build Orders and Expansions**

When and what you build determines how good an army you can field and how quickly you can do it.

As a Human player, you should immediately set three peasants to nuning gold. Have one start building an allar of kings, and set another one to building a barrack. Rope the third peasant from the mining crew, after he has detivered a bag of gold to your town hall, into building a farm. Have your town hall crank out two more peasants who immediately start chopping wood. When your first farm is done, build two more as wood permits. Eventually, you'll want five peasants on your gold mine and three on wood, with one extra floating if you can spare it for buildings and repairs. With this



first build order, you will have three footmen ready by the time your first hero arrives.

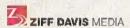
Build a blacksmith shop and a lumber mill as soon as you can for supporting riflemen, unit upgrades, and the improved lumber harvesting technology.

You won't want to expand to a new gold mine until you have an army large enough to defend it. But as a Human player, you have a great advantage in that you can rush construction. When you are ready to expand, send over three or four peasants and have two construct your

town hall while the other two build towers nearby. When they are done with the towers, have them help with the town hall. You'll be done much fuster than any other race, and have the peasants available for immediate mining.

As for building additional barracks, don't do it until you have expanded. A good rule of thumb is to have one barrack (or any other unit producing building) per gold mine. This isn't StarCraft, so you don't need as many unit-producing buildings, but if you have the gold, you should bump up your production schedule.





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## LLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL

## Greenspeak

Kill Joys

Facing a firestorm over GTA III, Jeff reaches for the gasoline By leff Green

Ithough it may be hard to believe, the editors at CGW are really not looking for trouble, most of the time. Live and let live, we say. Hakuna matata, we also say. Pulu see bagumba.

But try as we might, we cannot always avoid controversy. Certain topics are hot buttons, and whenever we bring them up, people get mad, Just ask Canada, And now, our mallbox is once again a seething cauldron of hate. Why? Because in the September issue we did something that many readers (and some industry professionals) are having a hard time with: we praised the excessively violent Grand Theft Auto III while trashing the also excessively violent Soldier of Fortune II.

Hypocritical, said some of you, immoral, said others. "Lame, Jeff, tame," sald one particularly disappointed

But although I will concede that we piled on SOF II rather hard, and although I will acknowledge that GTA III is not going to win a Nobel Peace Prize, I do not buy the central argument presented by a bunch of you, so I'm afraid I have to risk further wrath and bring this mess up here once again.

The gist of many of the complaints is that while both games are undeniably violent, SOF II is somehow less affensive because the people you are slaughtering are "bad guys" and thus deserve to have their brains blown out, whereas in GTA III you can kill completely innocent bystanders with no repercussions whatsoever.

"What is more deplorable?" asks one reader. "A realistic depiction of the horrors of war and terrorism, or players rewarded for carjacking and killing innocent people?"

"Are you going to let your daughter know how much 'fun' you think it is to



#### I acknowledge that GTA III is not going to win a Nobel Peace Prize.

kill hookers (in GTA III)?" asks another.

OK, those are good questions. One could, on the face of it, take the subject matter of each game, boil it down to a superficial summary-"kill terrorists" in one, "be a gangster" in the other-and conclude that the former is somehow more "moral," Well, dub. In no way can I reasonably sit here and write that the subject matter of GTA III-the situations it puts you in, the actions it allows you to take-is anything but deplorable. And it would be equally naïve (and unpatriotici) of me to argue that the good guys in SOF II do not in fact have good reasons for operating against the game's villains.

But this was not the point to us. Never

mind the myriad noncontroversial gameplay aspects-the level design, originality, depth, and variety-that so clearly make GTA III the superior game. To us, the reason one offended us and the other didn't was not a matter of whom you kill in the game or why. It was all in the attitude and presentation.

To us, SOF II's cold fixation on the act of violence itself, the "ultrarealistic damage modeling anywhere on the body" (as the developers put it themselves), was too much, no matter how "justified" it might be. Yeah, so maybe this is how real-life violence is. But you know, looking at stuff like this, I can't help but think: reality is way overrated.

With GTA III. I wonder if those who complain about it have ever even seen it. The game is painted in such broad comedic strokes, and it's so unrealistic that the supposed immorality of it has no weight, no resonance. I can't take it seriously because it doesn't take itself seriously, as it should be.

GTA III is a guilty pleasure. That's one of the great perks of being an adult: you can do stuff that's not always "good for you." Being a good husband, father, neighbor, and friend are all things I take very seriously. I play games to escape, to de-stress from all that, not to learn about life. I am not

looking for moral or spiritual guidance from games, in the same way that I'm not looking for nutritional value while wolfing down a pint of Chunky Monkey ice cream, I am indulging. On purpose. I try to balance out this crap-this stuff that I know is crap-with things that are better for me, like vegetables and PBS specials on marine life.

So please don't play the morality card. These are computer games we're talking about here. They're all just various degrees of dumb. Learn about life from the proper source, friends. Television.

Mr. Cranky Pants is off to Hawaii to chili out for two weeks. Send sunburn cures for his pasty ass to jeff\_green @ziffdavis.com.

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